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THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

COMPREHENDING

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES,

AND NUMEROUS WORKS,

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER;

A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE

AND CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY EMINENT PERSONS;

AND

VARIOUS ORIGINAL PIECES OF HIS COMPOSITION,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED:

THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN IN GREAT-BRITAIN, FOR NEAR HALF A CENTURY DURING WHICH HE FLOURISHED.

BY JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

——*Quò fit ut* OMNIS
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
VITA SENIS—— HORAT.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

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BEING disappointed in my hopes of meeting Johnson this year, so that I could hear none of his admirable sayings, I shall compensate for this want by inserting a collection of them, for which I am indebted to my worthy friend Mr. Langton, whose kind communications have been separately interwoven in many parts of this work. Very few articles of this collection were committed to writing by himself, he not having that habit; which he regrets, and which those who know the numerous opportunies he had of gathering the rich fruits of *Johnsonian* wit and wisdom, must ever regret. I however found, in conversation with him, that a good store of JOHNSONIANA was treasured in his mind; and I compared it to Herculaneum, or some old Roman field, which when dug, fully rewards the labour employed. The authenticity of every article is unquestionable. For the expression, I, who wrote them down in his presence, am partly answerable.

"Theocritus is not deserving of very high respect as a writer; as to the pastoral part, Virgil is very

1780. Ætat. 71. evidently superiour. He wrote, when there had been a larger influx of knowledge into the world than when Theocritus lived. Theocritus does not abound in description, though living in a beautiful country: the manners painted are coarse and gross. Virgil has much more description, more sentiment, more of nature, and more of art. Some of the most excellent parts of Theocritus are, where Castor and Pollux, going with the other Argonauts, land on the Bebrycian coast, and there fall into a dispute with Amycus, the King of that country; which is as well conducted as Euripides could have done it; and the battle is well related. Afterwards they carry off a woman, whose two brothers come to recover her, and expostulate with Castor and Pollux on their injustice; but they pay no regard to the brothers, and a battle ensues, where Castor and his brother are triumphant. —Theocritus seems not to have seen that the brothers have the advantage in their argument over his Argonaut heroes.—'The Sicilian Gossips' is a piece of merit."

"Callimachus is a writer of little excellence. The chief thing to be learned from him is his account of Rites and Mythology; which, though desirable to be known for the sake of understanding other parts of ancient authours, is the less pleasing or valuable part of their writings."

"Mattaire's account of the Stephani is a heavy book. He seems to have been a puzzle-headed man, with a large share of scholarship, but with little geometry or logick in his head, without method, and possessed of little genius. He wrote Latin verses from time to time, and published a set in his old age, which he called '*Senilia*;' in which he shews

so little learning or taste in writing, as to make *Carteret* adactyl.—In matters of genealogy it is necessary to give the bare names as they are; but in poetry, and in prose of any elegance in the writing, they require to have inflection given to them.—His book of the Dialects is a sad heap of confusion; the only way to write on them is to tabulate them with Notes, added at the bottom of the page, and references."

"It may be questioned, whether there is not some mistake as to the methods of employing the poor, seemingly on a supposition that there is a certain portion of work left undone for want of persons to do it; but if that is otherwise, and all the materials we have are actually worked up, or all the manufactures we can use or dispose of are already executed, then what is given to the poor, who are to be set at work, must be taken from some who now have it: as time must be taken for learning, (according to Sir William Petty's observation,) a certain part of those very materials that, as it is, are properly worked up, must be spoiled by the unskilfulness of novices. We may apply to well-meaning, but misjudging persons in particulars of this nature, what Giannone said to a monk, who wanted what he called to *convert* him: '*Tu sei santo, ma tu non sei filosopho.*'—It is an unhappy circumstance that one might give away five hundred pounds in a year to those that importune in the streets, and not do any good."

"There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity, than *condescension*; when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for his company."

"Having asked Mr. Langton if his father and mother had sat for their pictures, which he thought

1780. Ætat. 71. it right for each generation of a family to do, and being told they had opposed it, he said, 'Sir, among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture."

"John Gilbert Cooper related, that soon after the publication of his Dictionary, Garrick being asked by Johnson what people said of it, told him, that among other animadversions, it was objected that he cited authorities which were beneath the dignity of such a work, and mentioned Richardson. 'Nay, (said Johnson,) I have done worse than that: I have cited *thee*, David."

"Talking of expence, he observed, with what munificence a great merchant will spend his money, both from his having it at command, and from his enlarged views by calculation of a good effect upon the whole. 'Whereas (said he) you will hardly ever find a country gentleman, who is not a good deal disconcerted at an unexpected occasion for his being obliged to lay out ten pounds."

"When in good humour, he would talk of his own writings with a wonderful frankness and candour, and would even criticise them with the closest severity. One day, having read over one of his Ramblers, Mr. Langton asked him, how he liked that paper; he shook his head, and answered, 'too wordy.' At another time, when one was reading his tragedy of 'Irene,' to a company at a house in the country, he left the room: and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, Sir, I thought it had been better."

"Talking of a point of delicate scrupulosity of moral conduct, he said to Mr. Langton, 'Men of

harder minds than ours will do many things from which you and I would shrink; yet, Sir, they will, perhaps do more good in life than we. But let us try to help one another. If there be a wrong twist, it may be set right. It is not probable that two people can be wrong the same way." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Of the Preface to Capel's Shakspeare, he said, 'If the man would have come to me, I would have endeavoured to 'endow his purposes with words;' for as it is, he doth 'gabble monstrously."

"He related, that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him. 'Now, (said he,) one may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection; for had not my judgement failed me, I should have seen, that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me, as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character."

"One evening in company, an ingenious and learned gentleman read to him a letter of compliment which he had received from one of the Professors of a Foreign University. Johnson, in an irritable fit, thinking there was too much ostentation, said, 'I never receive any of these tributes of applause from abroad. One instance I recollect of a foreign publication, in which mention is made of *l'illustre Lockman*."[1]

"Of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he said, 'Sir, I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds."

[1] Secretary to the British Herring Fishery, remarkable for an extraordinary number of occasional verses, not of eminent merit.

1780. Ætat. 71. "He repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, in the Greek, our SAVIOUR's gracious expression concerning the forgiveness of Mary Magdalen,[2] 'Η πιστις σȣ σεσωκε σε· πορευου εις ειρηνην. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."[3] He said, 'the manner of this dismission is exceedingly affecting."

"He thus defined the difference between physical and moral truth: 'Physical truth, is, when you tell a thing as it actually is. Moral truth, is, when you tell a thing sincerely and precisely as it appears to you. I say such a one walked across the street; if he really did so, I told a physical truth. If I thought so, though I should have been mistaken, I told a moral truth."[4]

"Huggins, the translator of Ariosto, and Mr. Thomas Warton, in the early part of his literary life, had a dispute concerning that poet, of whom Mr. Warton, on his 'Observations on Spenser's Fairy Queen,' gave some account which Huggins attempted to answer with violence, and said, 'I will *militate* no longer against his *nescience*.' Huggins was master of the subject, but wanted expression. Mr. Warton's knowledge of it was then imperfect, but his manner lively and elegant. Johnson said, 'It appears to me, that Huggins has ball without powder, and Warton powder without ball."

"Talking of the Farce of 'High Life below Stairs,' he said, 'Here is a Farce, which is really very diverting, when you see it acted; and yet one

[2] [It does not appear that the woman forgiven was Mary Magdalen. K.]

[3] Luke vii. 50.

[4] [This account of the difference between moral and physical truth is in Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," and many other books. K.]

may read it, and not know that one has been reading any thing at all." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"He used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury-lane Theatre, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comick powers, and conversed more with her than with any of them. He said, 'Clive, Sir, is a good thing to sit by; she always understands what you say.' And she said of him, 'I love to sit by Dr. Johnson; he always entertains me.' One night, when 'The Recruiting Officer' was acted, he said to Mr. Holland, who had been expressing an apprehension that Dr. Johnson would disdain the works of Farquhar; 'No, Sir, I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit.'

"His friend Garrick was so busy in conducting the drama, that they could not have so much intercourse as Mr. Garrick used to profess an anxious wish that there should be.[5] There might, indeed, be something in the contemptuous severity as to the merit of acting, which his old preceptor nourished in himself, that would mortify Garrick after the great applause which he received from the audience. For though Johnson said of him, 'Sir, a man who has a nation to admire him every night, may well be expected to be somewhat elated;' yet he would treat theatrical matters with a ludicrous slight. He mentioned one evening, 'I met David coming off the stage, drest in a woman's riding hood, when he acted in The Wonder; I came full upon him, and I believe he was not pleased.'"

[5] [In a letter written by Johnson to a friend in Jan. 1742—3, he says, "I never see Garrick." M.]

1780. Ætat. 71. "Once he asked Tom Davies, whom he saw drest in a fine suit of clothes, 'And what art thou to-night?' Tom answered, 'The Thane of Ross;' (which it will be recollected is a very inconsiderable character.) 'O brave!' said Johnson."

"Of Mr. Longley, at Rochester, a gentleman of very considerable learning, whom Dr. Johnson met there, he said, 'My heart warms towards him. I was surprised to find in him such a nice acquaintance with the metre in the learned languages: though I was somewhat mortified that I had it not so much to myself, as I should have thought."

"Talking of the minuteness with which people will record the sayings of eminent persons, a story was told, that when Pope was on a visit to Spence at Oxford, as they looked from the window they saw a Gentleman Commoner, who was just come in from riding, amusing himself with whipping at a post. Pope took occasion to say, 'That young gentleman seems to have little to do.' Mr. Beauclerk observed, 'Then, to be sure, Spence turned round and wrote that down;' and went on to say to Dr. Johnson, 'Pope, Sir, would have said the same of you, if he had seen you distilling.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, if Pope, had told me of my distilling, I would have told him of his grotto."

"He would allow no settled indulgence of idleness upon principle, and always repelled every attempt to urge excuses for it. A friend one day suggested, that it was not wholesome to study soon after dinner. JOHNSON. 'Ah, Sir, don't give way to such a fancy. At one time of my life I had taken it into my head that it was not wholesome to study between breakfast and dinner."

"Mr. Beauclerk one day repeated to Dr. Johnson, Pope's lines, 1780. Ætat. 71.

'Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
'Ten metropolitans in preaching well:'

Then asked the Doctor, 'Why did Pope say this?' JOHNSON. 'Sir he hoped it would vex somebody."

"Dr. Goldsmith, upon occasion of Mrs. Lennox's bringing out a play,[6] said to Dr. Johnson at the CLUB, that a person had advised him to go and hiss it, because she had attacked Shakspeare in her book called 'Shakspeare Illustrated.' JOHNSON. 'And did not you tell him that he was a rascal?' GOLDSMITH. 'No, Sir, I did not. Perhaps he might not mean what he said.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, if he lied, it is a different thing.' Colman slily said, (but it is believed Dr. Johnson did not hear him,) 'Then the proper expression should have been,—Sir, if you don't lie, you're a rascal."

"His affection for Topham Beauclerk was so great, that when Beauclerk was labouring under that severe illness which at last occasioned his death, Johnson said, (with a voice faultering with emotion,) 'Sir, I would walk to the extent of the diameter of the earth to save Beauclerk."

"One night at the CLUB he produced a translation of an Epitaph which Lord Elibank had written in English, for his Lady, and requested of Johnson to turn it into Latin for him. Having read *Domina de*

[6] [Probably "The Sisters," a comedy performed one night only, at Covent Garden, in 1769. Dr. Goldsmith wrote an excellent epilogue to it.—Mrs. Lennox, whose maiden name was Ramsay, died in London in distressed circumstances, in her eighty-fourth year, January 4, 1804. M.]

1786. Ætat. 71. *North et Gray*, he said to Dyer,[7] 'You see, Sir, what barbarism we are compelled to make use of, when modern titles are to be specifically mentioned in Latin inscriptions.' When he had read it once aloud, and there had been a general approbation expressed by the company, he addressed himself to Mr. Dyer in particular, and said, 'Sir, I beg to have your judgement, for I know your nicety.' Dyer then very properly desired to read it over again; which having done, he pointed out an incongruity in one of the sentences. Johnson immediately assented to the observation, and said, 'Sir, this is owing to an alteration of a part of the sentence, from the form in which I had first written it; and I believe, Sir, you may have remarked, that the making a partial change, without a due regard to the general structure of the sentence, is a very frequent cause of errour in composition."

"Johnson was well acquainted with Mr. Dossie, authour of a treatise on Agriculture; and said of him, 'Sir, of the objects which the Society of Arts have chiefly in view, the chymical effects of bodies operating upon other bodies, he knows more than almost any man.' Johnson, in order to give Mr. Dossie his vote to be a member of this Society, paid up an arrear which had run on for two years. On this occasion he mentioned a circumstance, as characteristick of the Scotch. One of that nation, (said he,) who had been a candidate, against whom I had voted, came up to me with a civil salutation. Now, Sir, this is their way. An Englishman would have stomached it, and been sulky, and never have taken further notice of you; but a Scotchman, Sir, though

7 [See Vol. ii. p. 15. M.]

you vote nineteen times against him, will accost you with equal complaisance after each time, and the twentieth time, Sir, he will get your vote." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Talking on the subject of toleration, one day when some friends were with him in his study, he made his usual remark, that the State has a right to regulate the religion of the people, who are the children of the State. A clergyman having readily acquiesced in this, Johnson, who loved discussion, observed, 'But, Sir, you must go round to other States than our own. You do not know what a Bramin has to say for himself.[8] In short, Sir, I have got no further than this: Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test."

"A man, he observed, should begin to write soon; for, if he waits till his judgement is matured, his inability, through want of practice to express his conceptions, will make the disproportion so great between what he sees, and what he can attain, that he will probably be discouraged from writing at all. As a proof of the justness of this remark, we may instance what is related of the great Lord Granville;[9] that after he had written his letter giving an account of the battle of Dettingen, he said, 'Here is a letter, expressed in terms not good enough for a tallow-chandler to have used."

[8] Here Lord Macartney remarks, "A Bramin or any cast of the Hindoos will neither admit you to be of their religion, nor be converted to yours:—a thing which struck the Portuguese with the greatest astonishment, when they first discovered the East Indies."

[9] [John, the first Earl Granville, who died, January 2, 1763. M.]

1780. Ætat. 71. "Talking of a Court-martial that was sitting upon a very momentous publick occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision; and said, that perhaps there was not a member of it, who in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilites."

"Goldsmith one day brought to the CLUB a printed Ode, which he, with others, had been hearing read by its authour in a publick room, at the rate of five shillings each for admission. One of the company having read it aloud, Dr. Johnson said, 'Bolder words and more timorous meaning, I think never were brought together."

"Talking of Gray's Odes, he said, 'They are forced plants, raised in a hot-bed; and they are poor plants; they are but cucumbers after all.' A gentleman present, who had been running down Ode-writing in general, as a bad species of poetry, unluckily said, 'Had they been literally cucumbers, they had been better things than Odes.'—'Yes, Sir, (said Johnson,) for a *hog*."

"His distinction of the different degrees of attainment of learning was thus marked upon two occasions. Of Queen Elizabeth he said, 'She had learning enough to have given dignity to a bishop;' and of Mr. Thomas Davies he said, 'Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman."

"He used to quote, with great warmth, the saying of Aristotle recorded by Diogenes Laertius; that there was the same difference between one learned and unlearned, as between the living and the dead."

"It is very remarkable, that he retained in his memory very slight and trivial, as well as importan

things. As an instance of this, it seems that an inferior domestick of the Duke of Leeds had attempted to celebrate his Grace's marriage in such homely rhymes as he could make; and this curious composition having been sung to Dr. Johnson, he got it by heart, and used to repeat it in a very pleasant manner. Two of the stanzas were these: 1780. Ætat. 71.

'When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
'To a fine young lady of high quality,
'How happy will that gentlewoman be
'In his Grace of Leeds's good company.

'She shall have all that's fine and fair,
'And the best of silk and sattin shall wear;
'And ride in a coach to take the air,
'And have a house in St. James's-square."[1]

[1] The correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine who subscribes himself SCIOLUS, furnishes the following supplement:

"A lady of my acquaintance remembers to have heard her uncle sing those homely stanzas more than forty-five years ago. He repeated the second thus;

She shall breed young lords and ladies fair,
And ride abroad in a coach and three pair,
And the best, &c.
And have a house, &c.

And remembered a third which seems to have been the introductory one, and is believed to have been the only remaining one:

When the Duke of Leeds shall have made his choice
Of a charming young lady that's beautiful and wise,
She'll be the happiest young gentlewoman under the skies,
As long as the sun and moon shall rise,
And how happy shall, &c.

It is with pleasure I add that this stanza could never be more truly applied than at this present time [1792.]

1780. Ætat. 71. To hear a man, of the weight and dignity of Johnson, repeating such humble attempts at poetry, had a very amusing effect. He, however, seriously observed of the last stanza repeated by him, that it nearly comprised all the advantages that wealth can give."

"An eminent foreigner, when he was shewn the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd enquiries. 'Now there, Sir, (said he,) is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows any thing of the matter or not; an Englishmen is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say."

"His unjust contempt for foreigners was, indeed, extreme. One evening, at Old Slaughter's coffee-house, when a number of them were talking loud about little matters, he said, 'Does not this confirm old Meynell's observation—*For any thing I see, foreigners are fools.*"

"He said, that once, when he had a violent tooth-ach, a Frenchman accosted him thus: *Ah, Monsieur, vous etudiez trop.*"

"Having spent an evening at Mr. Langton's, with the Reverend Dr. Parr, he was much pleased with the conversation of that learned gentleman; and, after he was gone, said to Mr. Langton, 'Sir, I am obliged to you for having asked me this evening. Parr is a fair man.[2] I do not know when I have had an occasion of such free controversy. It is remark-

[2] [When the Corporation of Norwich applied to Johnson to point out to them a proper master for their Grammar-School, he recommended Dr. Parr, on his ceasing to be usher to Sumner at Harrow. B.]

able how much of a man's life may pass without meeting with any instance of this kind of open discussion." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"We may fairly institute a criticism between Shakspeare and Corneille, as they both had, though in a different degree, the lights of a latter age. It is not so just between the Greek dramatick writers and Shakspeare. It may be replied to what is said by one of the remarkers on Shakspeare, that though Darius's shade had *prescience*, it does not necessarily follow that he had all *past* particulars revealed to him."

"Spanish plays, being wildly and improbably farcical, would please children here, as children are entertained with stories full of prodigies; their experience not being sufficient to cause them to be so readily startled at deviations from the natural course of life. The machinery of the Pagans is uninteresting to us: when a Goddess appears in Homer or Virgil, we grow weary; still more so in the Grecian tragedies, as in that kind of composition a nearer approach to Nature is intended. Yet there are good reasons for reading romances; as—the fertility of invention, the beauty of style and expression, the curiosity of seeing with what kind of performances the age and country in which they were written was delighted: for it is to be apprehended, that at the time when very wild improbable tales were well received, the people were in a barbarous state, and so on the footing of children, as has been explained."

"It is evident enough that no one who writes now can use the Pagan deities and mythology; the only machinery, therefore, seems that of ministering spirits, the ghosts of the departed, witches, and fairies,

1780. Ætat. 71. though these latter, as the vulgar superstition concerning them (which, while in its force, infected at least the imagination of those that had more advantage in education, though their reason set them free from it,) is every day wearing out, seem likely to be of little futher assistance in the machinery of poetry. As I recollect, Hammond introduces a hag or witch into one of his love elegies, where the effect is unmeaning and disgusting."

"The man who uses his talent of ridicule in creating or grossly exaggerating the instances he gives, who imputes absurdities that did not happen, or when a man was a little ridiculous, describes him as having been very much so, abuses his talents greatly. The great use of delineating absurdities is, that we may know how far human folly can go; the account, therefore, ought of absolute necessity to be faithful. A certain character (naming the person) as to the general cast of it, is well decribed by Garrick, but a great deal of the phraseology he uses in it, is quite his own, particularly in the proverbial comparisons, 'obstinate as a pig,' &c. but I don't know whether it might not be true of Lord ——, that from a too great eagerness of praise and popularity, and a politeness carried to a ridiculous excess, he was likely, after asserting a thing in general, to give it up again in parts. For instance, if he had said Reynolds was the first of painters, he was capable enough of giving up, as objections might happen to be severally made, first, his outline,—then the grace in form,—then the colouring,—and lastly, to have owned that he was such a mannerist, that the disposition of his pictures was all alike."

"For hospitality, as formerly practised, there is

no longer the same reason; heretofore the poorer people were more numerous, and from want of commerce, their means of getting a livelihood more difficult; therefore the supporting them was an act of great benevolence; now that the poor can find maintenance for themselves, and their labour is wanted, a general undiscerning hospitality tends to ill, by withdrawing them from their work to idleness and drunkenness. Then, formerly rents were received in kind, so that there was a great abundance of provisions in possession of the owners of the lands, which since the plenty of money afforded by commerce, is no longer the case." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Hospitality to strangers and foreigners in our country is now almost at an end, since, from the increase of them that come to us, there have been a sufficient number of people that have found an interest in providing inns and proper accommodations, which is in general a more expedient method for the entertainment of travellers. Where the travellers and strangers are few, more of that hospitality subsists, as it has not been worth while to provide places of accommodation. In Ireland there is still hospitality to strangers, in some degree; in Hungary and Poland probably more.

"Colman, in a note on his translation of Terence, talking of Shakspeare's learning, asks, 'What says Farmer to this? What says Johnson?' Upon this he observed, 'Sir, let Farmer answer for himself: *I* never engaged in this controversy. I always said, Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English."

"A clergyman, whom he characterised as one who loved to say little oddities, was affecting one

1780. day, at a Bishop's table, a sort of slyness and freedom Ætat. 71. not in character, and repeated, as if part of 'The Old Man's Wish,' a song by Dr. Walter Pope, a verse bordering on licentiousness. Johnson rebuked him in the finest manner, by first shewing him that he did not know the passage he was aiming at, and thus humbling him: 'Sir, that is not the song: it is thus.' And he gave it right. Then looking stedfastly on him, 'Sir, there is a part of that song which I should wish to exemplify in my own life:

'May I govern my passions with absolute sway!"

"Being asked if Barnes knew a good deal of Greek, he answered, 'I doubt, Sir, he was *unoculus inter cæcos*."[3]

"He used frequently to observe, that men might be very eminent in a profession, without our perceiving any particular power of mind in them in conversation. 'It seems strange (said he) that a man should see so far to the right, who see so short a way to the left. Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topick you please, he is ready to meet you."

"A gentleman, by no means deficient in literature, having discovered less acquaintance with one of

[3] [Johnson in his Life of Milton, after mentioning that great poet's extraordinary fancy that the world was in its decay, and that his book was to be written in an age too late for heroick poesy, thus concludes: "However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity; he might still be a giant among the pigmies, *the one-eyed monarch of the blind*." J. B.—O.]

the Classicks than Johnson expected, when the gentleman left the room, he observed, 'You see, now, how little any body reads.' Mr. Langton happening to mention his having read a good deal in Clenardus's Greek Grammar, 'Why, Sir, (said he,) who is there in this town who knows any thing of Clenardus but you and I?' And upon Mr. Langton's mentioning that he had taken the pains to learn by heart the Epistle of St. Basil, which is given in that Grammar as a praxis, 'Sir, (said he,) I never made such an effort to attain Greek." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Of Dodsley's 'Publick Virtue, a Poem,' he said, 'It was fine *blank*; (meaning to express his usual contempt for blank verse:) however, this miserable poem did not sell, and my poor friend Doddy said, Publick Virtue was not a subject to interest the age."

"Mr. Langton, when a very young man, read Dodsley's, 'Cleone, a Tragedy,' to him, not aware of his extreme impatience to be read to. As it went on he turned his face to the back of his chair, and put himself into various attitudes, which marked his uneasiness. At the end of an act, however, he said, 'Come, let's have some more, let's go into the slaughter-house again, Lanky. But I am afraid there is more blood than brains.' Yet he afterwards said, 'When I heard you read it I thought higher of its power of language: when I read it myself, I was more sensible of its pathetick effect;' and then he paid it a compliment which many will think very extravagant. 'Sir, (said he,) if Otway had written this play, no other of his pieces would have been remembered.' Dodsley himself, upon this being repeated to him, said, 'It was too much:' it must be

1780. Ætat. 71. remembered, that Johnson always appeared not to be sufficiently sensible of the merit of Otway."[4]

"Snatches of reading (said he) will not make a Bentley or a Clarke. They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous. I would put a child into a library (where no unfit books are) and let him read at his choice. A child should not be discouraged from reading any thing that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above his reach. If that be the case, the child will soon find it out and desist; if not, he of course gains the instruction; which is so much the more likely to come, from the inclination with which he takes up the study."

"Though he used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned, that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them."

"A gentleman who introduced his brother to Dr. Johnson, was earnest to recommend him to the Doctor's notice, which he did by saying, 'When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining.'—'Sir, (said Johnson,) I can wait."

"When the rumour was strong that we should have a war, because the French would assist the Americans, he rebuked a friend with some asperity for supposing it, saying, 'No, Sir, national faith is not yet sunk so low."

"In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired,

[4] [This assertion concerning Johnson's insensibility to the pathetick powers of Otway, is too *round*. I once asked him, whether he did not think Otway frequently tender: when he answered, "Sir, he is all tenderness." B.]

he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch, for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of 'Thomas à Kempis;' and finding that there appeared no abatement of his power of acquisition, he then desisted, as thinking the experiment had been duly tried. Mr. Burke justly observed, that this was not the most vigorous trial, Low Dutch being a language so near to our own; had it been one of the languages entirely different, he might have been very soon satisfied." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Mr. Langton and he having gone to see a Freemason's funeral procession, when they were at Rochester, and some solemn musick being played on French horns, he said, 'This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds; adding 'that the impression made upon him was of a melancholy kind.' Mr. Langton saying, that this effect was a fine one.—JOHNSON. 'Yes, if it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good: but inasmuch as it is melancholy *per se*, it is bad.[5]

"Goldsmith had long a visionary project, that some time or other when his circumstances should be easier, he would go to Aleppo, in order to acquire a knowledge as far as might be, of any arts peculiar to the East, and introduce them into Britain. When this was talked of in Dr. Johnson's company, he said, 'Of all men Goldsmith is the most unfit to go

[5] [The French horn, however, is so far from being melancholy *per se*, that when the strain is light, and in the field, there is nothing so cheerful! It was the funeral occasion, and probably the solemnity of the strain, that produced the plaintive effect here mentioned." B.]

1780. Ætat. 71. out upon such an enquiry; for he is utterly ignorant of such arts as we already possess, and consequently could not know what would be accessions to our present stock of mechanical knowledge. Sir, he would bring home a grinding-barrow, which you see in every street in London, and think that he had furnished a wonderful improvement."

"Greek, Sir, (said he) is like lace; every man gets as much of it as he can."[6]

"When Lord Charles Hay, after his return from America, was preparing his defence to be offered to the Court-martial which he had demanded, having heard Mr. Langton as high in expressions of admiration of Johnson, as he usually was, he requested that Dr. Johnson might be introduced to him; and Mr. Langton having mentioned it to Johnson, he very kindly and readily agreed; and being presented by Mr. Langton to his Lordship, while under arrest, he saw him several times; upon one of which occasions Lord Charles read to him what he had prepared, which Johnson signified his approbation of, saying, 'It is a very good soldierly defence.' Johnson said, that he had advised his Lordship, that as it was in vain to contend with those who were in possession of power, if they would offer him the rank of Lieutenant-General, and a government, it would be better judged to desist from urging his complaints. It is well known that his Lordship died before the sentence was made known."

"Johnson one day gave high praise to Dr. Bentley's verses[7] in Dodsley's Collection, which he re-

[6] [It should be remembered, that this was said twenty-five or thirty years ago, when lace was very generally worn. M.]

[7] Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Cowley, says, that these are "the

cited with his usual energy. Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed in his decisive professorial 1780. Ætat. 71.

only English verses which Bentley is known to have written." I shall here insert them, and hope my readers will apply them.

" Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill
" And thence poetick laurels bring,
" Must first acquire due force and skill,
" Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

" Who Nature's treasures would explore,
" Her mysteries and arcana know;
" Must high as lofty Newton soar,
" Must stoop as delving Woodward low.

" Who studies ancient laws and rites,
" Tongues, arts, and arms, and history;
" Must drudge, like Selden, days and nights,
" And in the endless labour die.

" Who travels in religious jars,
" (Truth mixt with errour, shades with rays,)
" Like Whiston, wanting pyx or stars,
" In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

" But grant our hero's hope, long toil
" And comprehensive genius crown,
" All sciences, all arts his spoil,
" Yet what reward, or what renown?

" Envy, innate in vulgar souls,
" Envy steps in and stops his rise;
" Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
" His lustre, and his worth decries.

" He lives inglorious or in want,
" To college and old books confin'd;
" Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant,
" Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind:
" Yet left content, a genuine Stoick he,
" Great without patron, rich without South Sea."

[A different and probably a more accurate copy of these spirited

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

1780. Ætat. 71. manner, 'Very well—Very well.' Johnson however added, 'Yes, they *are* very well, Sir; but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of a strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.'"[8]

"Drinking tea one day at Garrick's with Mr. Langton, he was questioned if he was not somewhat of a heretick as to Shakspeare; said Garrick, 'I doubt he is a little of an infidel.'—'Sir, (said Johnson) I will stand by the lines I have written on Shakspeare in my Prologue at the opening of your Theatre.' Mr. Langton suggested, that in the line

'And panting Time toil'd after him in vain;'

verses is to be found in "The Grove, or a Collection of Original Poems and Translations," &c. 1721. In this miscellany the last stanza, which in Dodsley's copy is unquestionably uncouth, is thus exhibited :

"*Inglorious or by wants inthrall'd*,
"To college and old books confin'd,
"*A pedant from his learning call'd*,
"Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind."

J. B.—O.]

[8] The difference between Johnson and Smith is apparent even in this slight instance. Smith was a man of extraordinary application, and had his mind crowded with all manner of subjects; but the force, acuteness, and vivacity of Johnson were not to be found there. He had book-making so much in his thoughts, and was so chary of what might be turned to account in that way, that he once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he made it a rule when in company, never to talk of what he understood. Beauclerk had for a short time a pretty high opinion of Smith's conversation. Garrick after listening to him for a while, as to one of whom his expectations had been raised, turned slyly to a friend, and whispered him, "What say you to this?—eh? *flabby*, I think."

Johnson might have had in his eye the passage in the 'Tempest,' where Prospero says of Miranda, 1780. Ætat. 71.

' ——— She will outstrip all praise,
' And make it halt behind her.'

Johnson said nothing. Garrick then ventured to observe, I do not think that the happiest line in the praise of Shakspeare.' Johnson exclaimed (smiling,) ' Prosaical rogues! next time I write, I'll make both time and space pant."[9]

" It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames, to accost each other as they passed, in the most abusive language they could invent, generally, however with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry, in Number 383 of 'The Spectator,' when Sir Roger de Coverly and he are going to Spring-garden. Johnson was once eminently successful in

[9] I am sorry to see in the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," Vol. II. "An Essay on the Character of Hamlet," written, I should suppose, by a very young man, though called "Reverend;" who speaks with presumptuous petulance of the first literary character of his age. Amidst a cloudy confusion of words, (which hath of late too often passed in Scotland for *Metaphysicks*,) he thus ventures to criticise one of the noblest lines in our language:—Dr. Johnson has remarked, that 'time toiled after him in vain.' But I should apprehend, that this is *entirely to mistake the character*. Time toils after *every great man*, as well as after Shakspeare. The *workings* of an ordinary mind *keep pace*, indeed, with time; they move no faster; *they have their beginning, their middle, and their end;* but superiour natures can *reduce these into a point*. They do not, indeed, *suppress* them; but they *suspend*, or they *lock them up in the breast*." The learned Society, under whose sanction such gabble is ushered into the world, would do well to offer a premium to any one who will discover its meaning.

1780. Ætat. 71. this species of contest; a fellow having attacked him with some coarse railery, Johnson answered him thus, 'Sir, your wife *under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house*, is a receiver of stolen goods." One evening when he and Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were in company together, and the admirable scolding of Timon of Athens was mentioned, this instance of Johnson's was quoted, and thought to have at least equal excellence.

"As Johnson always allowed the extraordinary talents of Mr. Burke, so Mr. Burke was fully sensible of the wonderful powers of Johnson. Mr. Langton recollects having passed an evening with both of them, when Mr. Burke repeatedly entered upon topicks which it was evident he would have illustrated with extensive knowledge and richness of expression; but Johnson always seized upon the conversation, in which, however, he acquitted himself in a most masterly manner. As Mr. Burke and Mr. Langton were walking home, Mr. Burke observed that Johnson had been very great that night; Mr. Langton joined in this, but added, he could have wished to hear more from another person; (plainly intimating that he meant Mr. Burke.) 'O, no, (said Mr. Burke) it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him."

"Beauclerk having observed to him of one of their friends, that he was aukward at counting money, 'Why, Sir, said Johnson, I am likewise aukward at counting money. But then, Sir, the reason is plain; I have had very little money to count."

"He had an abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, of whom he said, 'Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman, such are his stores of literature, such his knowledge in divinity, and such

his exemplary life;' he added, "and Sir, he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions; he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality." 1780. Ætat. 71.

"Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind; when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, 'Pray, Sir, don't leave us; for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist."

"Goldsmith upon being visited by Johnson one day in the Temple, said to him with a little jealousy of the appearance of his accommodation, 'I shall soon be in better chambers than these.' Johnson at the same time checked him and paid him a handsome compliment, implying that a man of his talents should be above attention to such distinctions,—'Nay, Sir, never mind that. *Nil te quæsiveris extra.*"

"At the time when his pension was granted to him, he said, with a noble literary ambition, "Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did."

"As an instance of the niceness of his taste, though he praised West's translation of Pindar, he pointed out the following passages as faulty, by expressing a circumstance so minute as to detract from the general dignity which should prevail:

Down then from thy glittering *nail*,
Take, O muse thy Dorian lyre."

"When Mr. Vesey[1] was proposed as a member of

[1] [The Right Honourable Agmondesham Vesey was elected a member of the LITERARY CLUB in 1773, and died in 1784. M.]

1780. Ætat. 71. the LITERARY CLUB, Mr. Burke began by saying that he was a man of gentle manners. 'Sir, said Johnson, you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners; you have said enough."

"The late Mr. Fitzherbert told Mr. Langton, that Johnson said to him, Sir, a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing. than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down."

"My dear friend Dr. Bathurst, (said he with a warmth of approbation) declared, he was glad that his father, who was a West-Indian planter, had left his affairs in total ruin, because having no estate, he was not under the temptation of having slaves."

"Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson when he carried Mr. Langton to see him, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression, 'Sir, I can make him *rear*.' But he failed; for in that interview Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his Clarissa into German."

[2] A literary lady has favoured me with a characteristick anecdote of Richardson. One day at his country-house at Northend, where a large company was assembled at dinner, a gentleman who was just returned from Paris, willing to please Mr. Richardson, mentioned to him a very flattering circumstance,—that he had seen his Clarissa lying on the King's brother's table. Richardson observing that part of the company were engaged in talking to each other, affected then not to attend to it. But by and by, when there was a general silence, and he thought that the flattery might be fully heard, he addressed himself to the gentleman, 'I think, Sir, you were saying something about,—pausing in a high flutter

"Once when somebody produced a newspaper in which there was a letter of stupid abuse of Sir Joshua Reynolds, of which Johnson himself came in for a share,—'Pray, said he, let us have it read aloud from beginning to end;' which being done, he with a ludicrous earnestness, and not directing his look to any particular person, called out, 'Are we alive after all this satire!" 1780. Ætat. 71.

"He had a strong prejudice against the political character of Secker, one instance of which appeared at Oxford, where he expressed great dissatisfaction at his varying the old established toast, 'Church and King.' 'The Archbishop of Canterbury, said he (with an affected smooth smiling grimace) drinks, 'Constitution in Church and State.' Being asked what difference there was between the two toasts, he said, 'Why, Sir, you may be sure he meant something.' Yet when the life of that prelate, prefixed to his sermons by Dr. Porteus and Dr. Stinton his chaplains, first came out, he read it with the utmost avidity, and said, 'It is a life well written, and that well deserves to be recorded."

"Of a certain noble Lord, he said, 'Respect him, you could not; for he had no mind of his own. Love him you could not; for that which you could do with him, every one else could."

"Of Dr. Goldsmith he said, 'No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had."

of expectation. The gentleman provoked at his inordinate vanity, resolved not to indulge it, and with an exquisitely sly air of indifference answered, 'A mere trifle, Sir, not worth repeating.' The mortification of Richardson was visible, and he did not speak ten words more the whole day. Dr. Johnson was present, and appeared to enjoy it much.

1780. Ætat. 71. "He told in his lively manner the following literary anecdote: 'Green and Guthrie, an Irishman and a Scotchman, undertook a translation of Duhalde's history of China. Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French; and these two undertook to translate Duhalde's history of China. In this translation there was found "the twenty-sixth day of the new moon." Now as the whole age of the moon is but twenty-eight days, the moon instead of being new, was nearly as old as it could be. The blunder arose from their mistaking the word *neuviéme* ninth, *nouvelle* or *neuve*, new."

"Talking of Dr. Blagden's copiousness and precision of communication, Dr. Johnson said, 'Blagden, Sir, is a delightful fellow."

"On occasion of Dr. Johnson's publishing his pamphlet of 'The False Alarm,' there came out a very angry answer (by many supposed to be by Mr. Wilkes.) Dr. Johnson determined on not answering it; but, in conversation with Mr. Langton mentioned a particular or two, which if he *had* replied to it, he might perhaps have inserted.—In the answerer's pamphlet, it had been said with solemnity, 'Do you consider, Sir, that a House of Commons is to the people as a creature is to its Creator.' To this question, said Dr. Johnson, I could have replied, that—in the first place—the idea of a Creator must be such as that he has a power to unmake or annihilate his creature.

"Then it cannot be conceived that a creature can make laws for its Creator.[3]

[3] His profound adoration of the Great First Cause was such as to set him above that "Philosophy and vain deceit," with

"Depend upon it, said he, that if a man *talks* of his misfortunes, there is something in them that is not disagreeable to him; for where there is nothing but pure misery, there never is any recourse to the mention of it.— 1780. Ætat. 71.

"A man must be a poor beast, that should *read* no more in quantity than he could *utter* aloud.—

"Imlac in "Rasselas," I spelt with a *c* at the end, because it is less like English, which should always have the Saxon *k* added to the *c*.[4]

"Many a man is mad in certain instances, and goes through life without having it perceived;—for example, a madness has seized a person of supposing himself obliged literally to pray continually; had the madness turned the opposite way, and the person thought it a crime ever to pray, it might not improbably have continued unobserved.

"He apprehended that the delineation of *characters* in the end of the first Book of the 'Retreat of the ten thousand' was the first instance of the kind that was known.

"Supposing (said he) a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome: for instance,—if a woman should continually dwell upon the subject of the Arian heresy.

"No man speaks concerning another, even suppose it be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear

which men of narrow conceptions have been infected. I have heard him strongly maintain that "what is right is not so from any natural fitness, but because GOD wills it to be right;" and it is certainly so, because he has predisposed the relations of things so as that which he wills must be right. BOSWELL.

[4] I hope the authority of the great Master of our language will stop that curtailing innovation, by which we see *critic*, *public*, &c. frequently written instead of *critick*, *publick*, &c.

1780. Ætat. 71. him, exactly as he would, if he thought he was within hearing.

"The applause of a single human being is of great consequence:" This he said to me with great earnestness of manner, very near the time of his decease, on occasion of having desired me to read a letter addressed to him from some person in the North of England; which when I had done, and he asked me what the contents were, as I thought being particular upon it might fatigue him, it being of great length, I only told him in general that it was highly in his praise;—and then he expressed himself as above.

"He mentioned with an air of satisfaction what Baretti had told him; that, meeting, in the course of his studying English, with an excellent paper in the Spectator, one of four that were written by the respectable Dissenting Minister Mr. Grove of Taunton, and observing the genius and energy of mind that it exhibits, it greatly quickened his curiosity to visit our country; as he thought, if such were the lighter periodical essays of our authours, their productions on more weighty occasions must be wonderful indeed!

"He observed once, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, that a beggar in the street will more readily ask alms from a *man*, though there should be no marks of wealth in his appearance, than from even a well-dressed *woman*;[5] which he accounted for from the great degree of carefulness as to money, that is to be found in women; saying farther upon it, that, the opportunities in general that they possess of improving their condition are much fewer than men have; and

[5] Sterne is of a direct contrary opinion. See his "Sentimental Journey," Article, "*The Mystery.*" BOSWELL.

adding, as he looked round the company, which consisted of men only,—there is not one of us who does not think he might be richer, if he would use his endeavour.

"He thus characterised an ingenious writer of his acquaintance: 'Sir, he is an enthusiast by rule.'

"*He may hold up that* SHIELD *against all his enemies*;"—was an observation on Homer, in reference to his description of the shield of Achilles, made by Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife to his friend Mr. Fitzherbert of Derbyshire, and respected by Dr. Johnson as a very fine one. He had in general a very high opinion of that lady's understanding.

"An observation of Bathurst's may be mentioned, which Johnson repeated, appearing to acknowledge it to be well founded; namely, it was somewhat remarkable how seldom, on occasion of coming into the company of any new person, one felt any wish or inclination to see him again."

This year the Reverend Dr. Franklin having published a translation of "Lucian," inscribed to him the *Demonax* thus:

"To DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, the Demonax of the present age, this piece is inscribed by a sincere admirer of his respectable talents,

"THE TRANSLATOR."

Though upon a particular comparison of Demonax and Johnson, there does not seem to be a great deal of similarity between them, this Dedication is a just compliment from the general character given by

1781. Ætat. 72. Lucian of the ancient Sage, "αριϛον ων οιδα εγω φιλοσοφων γενομενον, the best philosopher whom I have ever seen or known."

In 1781, Johnson at last completed his "Lives of the Poets," of which he gives this account: "Some time in March I finished the 'Lives of the Poets.' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste."[6] In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them: "Written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety."[7]

This is the work, which of all Dr. Johnson's writings will perhaps be read most generally, and with most pleasure. Philology and biography were his favourite pursuits, and those who lived most in intimacy with him, heard him upon all occasions, when there was a proper opportunity, take delight in expatiating upon the various merits of the English Poets: upon the niceties of their characters, and the events of their progress through the world which they contributed to illuminate. His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that in performing what he had undertaken in this way, he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper; exhibiting first each Poet's life, and then subjoining a critical examination of his genius and works. But when he began to write, the subject swelled in such a manner, that instead of prefaces to each poet, of no more than a few pages, as he had originally intended,[8] he produced

[6] Prayers and Meditations, p. 190. [7] Ibid. 174.

[8] His design is thus announced in his *Advertisement*: "The Booksellers having determined to publish a body of English Poetry,

an ample, rich, and most entertaining view of them in every respect. In this he resembled Quintilian, who tells us, that in the composition of his Institutions of Oratory, "*Latiùs se tamen aperiente materiâ, plus quàm imponebatur oneris sponte suscepi.*" The booksellers, justly sensible of the great additional value of the copy-right, presented him with another hundred pounds, over and above two hundred, for which his agreement was to furnish such prefaces as he thought fit.

This was, however, but a small recompence for such a collection of biography, and such principles and illustrations of criticism, as, if digested and arranged in one system, by some modern Aristotle or Longinus, might form a code upon that subject, such as no other nation can shew. As he was so good as to make me a present of the greatest part of the original and indeed only manuscript of this admirable work, I have an opportunity of observing with wonder the correctness with which he rapidly struck off such glowing composition. He may be assimilated to the Lady in Waller, who could impress with "Love at first sight:"

"Some other nymphs with colours faint,
"And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,
"And a weak heart in time destroy;
"She has a stamp, and prints the boy."

I was persuaded to promise them a preface to the works of each authour; an undertaking, as it was then presented to my mind, not very tedious or difficult.

"My purpose was only to have allotted to every poet an Advertisement, like that which we find in the French Miscellanies, containing a few dates, and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope by the honest desire of giving useful pleasure."

1781. Ætat. 72. That he, however, had a good deal of trouble, and some anxiety in carrying on the work, we see from a series of letters to Mr. Nichols the printer,[9] whose variety of literary enquiry and obliging disposition,

9 Thus:—"In the Life of Waller, Mr. Nichols will find a reference to the Parliamentary History, from which a long quotation is to be inserted. If Mr. Nichols cannot easily find the book, Mr. Johnson will send it from Streatham."

"Clarendon is here returned."

"By some accident, I laid *your* note upon Duke up so safely, that I cannot find it. Your informations have been of great use to me. I must beg it again; with another list of our authors, for I have laid that with the other. I have sent Stepney's Epitaph. Let me have the revises as soon as can be. Dec. 1778."

"I have sent Philips, with his Epitaphs, to be inserted. The fragment of a preface is hardly worth the impression, but that we may seem to do something. It may be added to the Life of Philips. The Latin page is to be added to the Life of Smith. I shall be at home to revise the two sheets of Milton. March 1, 1779."

"Please to get me the last edition of Hughes's Letters; and try to get Dennis upon Blackmore, and upon Cato, and any thing of the same writer against Pope. Our materials are defective."

"As Waller professed to have imitated Fairfax, do you think a few pages of Fairfax would enrich our edition? Few readers have seen it, and it may please them. But it is not necessary."

"An account of the lives and works of some of the most eminent English Poets. By, &c.—'The English Poets, biographically and critically considered, by SAM. JOHNSON.'—Let Mr. Nichols take his choice, or make another to his mind. May, 1781."

"You somehow forgot the advertisement for the new edition. It was not enclosed. Of Gay's Letters I see not that any use can be made, for they give no information of any thing. That he was a member of a Philosophical Society is something; but surely he could be but a corresponding member. However, not having his life here, I know not how to put it in, and it is of little importance."

"See several more in "The Gentleman's Magazine," 1785. The Editor of that Miscellany, in which Johnson wrote for several years, seems justly to think that every fragment of so great a man is worthy of being preserved."

rendered him useful to Johnson. Mr. Steevens appears, from the papers in my possession, to have supplied him with some anecdotes and quotations; and I observe the fair hand of Mrs. Thrale as one of his copyists of select passages. But he was principally indebted to my steady friend Mr. Isaac Reed, of Staple-inn, whose extensive and accurate knowledge of English literary History I do not express with exaggeration, when I say it is wonderful; indeed his labours have proved it to the world; and all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance can bear testimony to the frankness of his communications in private society. 1781. Ætat. 72.

It is not my intention to dwell upon each of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," or attempt an analysis of their merits, which, were I able to do it, would take up too much room in this work; yet I shall make a few observations upon some of them, and insert a few various readings.

The Life of Cowley he himself considered as the best of the whole, on account of the dissertation which it contains on the *Metaphysical Poets*. Dryden, whose critical abilities were equal to his poetical, had mentioned them in his excellent Dedication of his Juvenal, but had barely mentioned them. Johnson has exhibited them at large, with such happy illustration from their writings, and in so luminous a manner, that indeed he may be allowed the full merit of novelty, and to have discovered to us, as it were, a new planet in the poetical hemisphere.

It is remarked by Johnson, in considering the works of a poet,[1] that "amendments are seldom

[1] Life of Sheffield.

1781. made without some token of a rent;" but I do not
Ætat. 72. find that this is applicable to prose.[2] We shall see that though his amendments in this work are for the better, there is nothing of the *pannus assutus*; the texture is uniform: and indeed, what had been there at first, is very seldom unfit to have remained.

Various Readings[3] *in the Life of* COWLEY.

"All [future votaries of] *that may hereafter pant for* solitude.

"To conceive and execute the [agitation or perception] *pains and the pleasures* of other minds.

"The wide effulgence of [the blazing] *a summer* noon."

In the Life of WALLER, Johnson gives a distinct and animated narrative of publick affairs in that variegated period, with strong yet nice touches of character; and having a fair opportunity to display his political principles, does it with an unqualified manly confidence, and satisfies his readers how nobly he might have executed a *Tory History* of his country.

So easy is his style in these Lives, that I do not recollect more than three uncommon or learned words; one, when giving an account of the approach of Waller's mortal disease, he says, "he found his legs grow *tumid*;" by using the expression his legs

[2] [See, however, p. 10, of this volume, where the same remark is made, and Johnson is there speaking of *prose*. In his Life of Dryden, his observations in the Opera of "King Arthur" furnish a striking instance of the truth of this remark. M.]

[3] The original reading is enclosed in crotchets, and the present one is printed in Italicks.

swelled, he would have avoided this; and there would have been no impropriety in its being followed by the interesting question to his physician, "What that *swelling* meant?" Another, when he mentions that Pope had *emitted* proposals; when *published* or *issued*, would have been more readily understood; and a third, when he calls Orrery and Dr. Delany, writers both undoubtedly *veracious*; when *true*, *honest*, or *faithful*, might have been used. Yet, it must be owned, that none of these are *hard* or *too big* words: that custom would make them seem as easy as any others; and that a language is richer and capable of more beauty of expression, by having a greater variety of synonimes. 1781. Ætat. 72.

His dissertation upon the unfitness of poetry for the aweful subjects of our holy religion, though I do not entirely agree with him, has all the merit of originality, with uncommon force and reasoning.

Various Readings in the Life of WALLER.

"Consented to [the insertion of their names] *their own nomination.*

"[After] *paying* a fine of ten thousand pounds.

"Congratulating Charles the Second on his [coronation] *recovered right.*

"He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be [confessed to degrade his powers] *scorned as a prostituted mind.*

"The characters by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings are [elegance] *sprightliness* and dignity.

1781. Ætat. 72.

"Blossoms to be valued only as they [fetch] *fore-tell* fruits.

"Images such as the superficies of nature [easily] *readily* supplies.

"[His] *Some* applications [are sometimes] *may be thought* too remote and unconsequential.

"His images are [sometimes confused] *not always distinct*.

"Against his Life of MILTON, the hounds of Whiggism have opened in full cry. But of Milton's great excellence as a poet, where shall we find such a blazon as by the hand of Johnson? I shall select only the following passage concerning "*Paradise Lost*:"

"Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current, through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation."

Indeed even Dr. Towers, who may be considered as one of the warmest zealots of *The Revolution Society* itself, allows, that "Johnson has spoken in the highest terms of the abilities of that great poet, and has bestowed on his principal poetical compositions, the most honourable encomiums."[4]

[4] See "An Essay on the Life, Character, and Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson," London, 1787; which is very well written, making a proper allowance for the mocratical bigotry of its au-

That a man, who venerated the Church and Monarchy as Johnson did, should speak with a just abhorrence of Milton as a politician, or rather as a daring foe to good polity, was surely to be expected; and to those who censure him, I would recommend his commentary on Milton's celebrated complaint of his situation, when by the lenity of Charles the Second, "a lenity of which (as Johnson well observes) the world has had perhaps no other example, he, who had written in justification of the murder of his Sovereign, was safe under an *Act of Oblivion*." "No sooner is he safe than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, with darkness and with dangers compassed round.* This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but to add the mention of danger, was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen, indeed, on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But 1781. Ætat. 72.

thour: whom I cannot however but admire for his liberality in speaking thus of my illustrious friend:

"He possessed extraordinary powers of understanding, which were much cultivated by study, and still more by meditation and reflection. His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and his judgement keen and penetrating. He had a strong sense of the importance of religion; his piety was sincere, and sometimes ardent; and his zeal for the interests of virtue was often manifested in his conversation and in his writings. The same energy which was displayed in his literary productions was exhibited also in his conversation, which was various, striking, and instructive; and perhaps no man ever equalled him for nervous and pointed repartees.

"His Dictionary, his moral Essays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey useful instruction, and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written shall be understood."

1781. Ætat. 72. of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required imprudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach, or brutality of insolence."

I have, indeed, often wondered how Miltion, "an acrimonious and surly Republican,"[4]—"a man who in his domestick relations was so severe and arbitrary,"[5] and whose head was filled with the hardest and most dismal tenets of Calvinism, should have been such a poet; should not only have written with sublimity, but with beauty, and even gaiety; should have exquisitely painted the sweetest sensations of which our nature is capable; imaged the delicate raptures of connubial love; nay, seemed to be animated with all the spirit of revelry. It is a proof that in the human mind the departments of judgement and imagination, perception and temper, may sometimes be divided by strong partitions; and that the light and shade in the same character may be kept so distinct as never to be blended.[6]

In the Life of Milton, Johnson took occasion to maintain his own and the general opinion of the excellence of rhyme over blank verse, in English poetry; and quotes this apposite illustration of it by "an ingenious critick," that *it seems to be verse only to the eye*.[7] The gentleman whom he thus charac-

[4] Johnson's Life of Milton. [5] Ibid.

[6] Mr. Malone thinks it is rather a proof that he felt nothing of those cheerful sensations which he has described: that on these topicks it is the *poet*, and not the *man*, that writes.

[7] One of the most natural instances of the effect of blank verse occurred to the late Earl of Hopeton. His Lordship observed one of his shepherds poring in the fields upon Milton's "Paradise

terises, is (as he told Mr. Seward) Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, in Surrey, whose knowledge and taste in the fine arts is universally celebrated; with whose elegance of manners the writer of the present work has felt himself much impressed, and to whose virtues a common friend, who has known him long, and is not much addicted to flattery, gives the highest testimony. 1781. Ætat. 72.

Various Readings in the Life of MILTON.

"I cannot find any meaning but this which [his most bigoted advocates] *even kindness and reverence* can give.

"[Perhaps no] *scarcely any* man ever wrote so much, and praised so few.

"A certain [rescue] *preservative* from oblivion.

"Let me not be censured for this digression, as [contracted] *pedantick* or paradoxical.

"Socrates rather was of opinion, that what we had to learn was how to [obtain and communicate happiness] *do good and avoid evil.*

"Its elegance [who can exhibit?] *is less attainable.*"

I could, with pleasure, expatiate upon the masterly execution of the Life of DRYDEN, which we have seen[8] was one of Johnson's literary projects at an early period, and which it is remarkable, that after

Lost;" and having asked him what book it was, the man answered, "An't please your Lordship, this is a very odd sort of an authour: he would fain rhyme, but cannot get at it."

[8] See Vol. III. page 72.

1781. Ætat. 72. desisting from it, from a supposed scantiness of materials, he should, at an advanced age, have exhibited so amply.

His defence of that great poet against the illiberal attacks upon him, as if his embracing the Roman Catholick communion had been a time-serving measure, is a piece of reasoning at once able and candid. Indeed, Dryden himself, in his "Hind and Panther," hath given such a picture of his mind, that they who know the anxiety for repose as to the aweful subject of our state beyond the grave, though they may think his opinion ill-founded, must think charitably of his sentiment:

"But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
"For erring judgements an unerring guide!
"Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
"A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
"O! teach me to believe thee thus conceal'd,
"And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
"But Her alone for my director take,
"Whom thou hast promis'd never to forsake.
"My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
"My manhood long misled by wand'ring fires,
"Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
"My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
"Such was I, such by nature still I am;
"Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.
"Good life be now my task: my doubts are done;
"What more could shock my faith than Three in One?"

In drawing Dryden's character, Johnson has given,

though I suppose unintentionally, some touches of his own. Thus: "The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather then felt; and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted. He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick;[9] and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others."—It may indeed be observed, that in all the numerous writings of Johnson, whether in prose or verse, and even in his Tragedy, of which the subject is the distress of an unfortunate Princess, there is not a single passage that ever drew a tear. 1781. Ætat. 72.

Various readings in the Life of DRYDEN.

"The reason of this general perusal, Addison has attempted to [find in] *derive from* the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets.

"His best actions are but [convenient] *inability of* wickedness.

"When once he had engaged himself in disputation, [matter] *thoughts* flowed in on either side.

"The abyss of an un-ideal [emptiness] *vacancy*.

"These, like [many other harlots,] *the harlots of other men*, had his love though not his approbation.

[9] [It seems to me, that there are many pathetick passages in Johnson's works, both prose and verse. K.]

1781. Ætat. 72. "He [sometimes displays] *descends to display* his knowledge with pedantick ostentation.

"French words which [were then used in] *had then crept into* conversation."

The Life of Pope was written by Johnson *con amore*, both from the early possession which that writer had taken of his mind, and from the pleasure which he must have felt, in for ever silencing all attempts to lessen his poetical fame, by demonstrating his excellence, and pronouncing the following triumphant eulogium:—"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only shew the narrowness of the definer; though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."

I remember once to have heard Johnson say, "Sir, a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." That power must undoubtedly be allowed its due share in enhancing the value of his captivating composition.

Johnson who had done liberal justice to Warburton in his edition of Shakspeare, which was published during the life of that powerful writer, with still greater liberality took an opportunity, in the life of Pope, of paying the tribute due to him when he

was no longer in "high place," but numbered with the dead.[1] 1781. Ætat. 72.

[1] Of Johnson's conduct towards Warburton, a very honourable notice is taken by the Editor of "Tracts by Warburton, and a Warburtonian, not admitted into the Collection of their respective Works." After an able and "fond, though not undistinguishing," consideration of Warburton's character, he says, "In two immortal works, Johnson has stood forth in the foremost rank of his admirers. By the testimony of such a man, impertinence must be abashed, and malignity itself must be softened. Of literary merit, Johnson, as we all know, was a sagacious but a most severe judge. Such was his discernment, that he pierced into the most secret springs of human actions; and such was his integrity, that he always weighed the moral characters of his fellow-creatures in the 'balance of the sanctuary.' He was too courageous to propitiate a rival, and too proud to truckle to a superiour. Warburton he knew, as I know him, and as every man of sense and virtue would wish to be known,—I mean, both from his own writings, and from the writings of those who dissented from his principles, or who envied his reputation. But, as to favours, he had never received or asked any from the Bishop of Gloucester: and, if my memory fails me not, he had seen him only once, when they met almost without design, conversed without much effort, and parted without any lasting impression of hatred or affection. Yet, with all the ardour of sympathetick genius, Johnson had done that spontaneously and ably, which, by some writers, had been before attempted injudiciously, and which, by others, from whom more successful attempts might have been expected, has not *hitherto* been done at all. He spoke well of Warburton, without insulting those whom Warburton despised. He suppressed not the imperfections of this extraordinary man, while he endeavoured to do justice to his numerous and transcendental excellencies. He defended him when living, amidst the clamours of his enemies; and praised him when dead, amidst the *silence of his friends*."

Having availed myself of this editor's eulogy on my departed friend, for which I warmly thank him, let me not suffer the lustre of his reputation, honestly acquired by profound learning and vigorous eloquence, to be tarnished by a charge of illiberality. He has been accused of invidiously dragging again into light cer-

1781. Ætat. 72. It seems strange, that two such men as Johnson and Warburton, who lived in the same age and country, should not only not have been in any degree of intimacy, but been almost personally unacquainted. But such instances, though we must wonder at them, are not rare. If I am rightly informed, after a careful enquiry, they never met but once, which was at the house of Mrs. French, in London, well known for her elegant assemblies, and bringing eminent characters together. The interview proved to be mutually agreeable.

I am well informed, that Warburton said of Johnson, "I admire him, but I cannot bear his style:" and that Johnson being told of this, said, "That is exactly my case as to him." The manner in which he expressed his admiration of the fertility of Warburton's genius and of the variety of his materials, was, "The table is always full, Sir. He brings things from the north, and the south, and from every quarter. In his 'Divine Legation,' you are always

tain writings of a person respectable by his talents, his learning, his station and his age, which were published a great many years ago, and have since, it is said, been silently given up by their authour. But when it is considered that these writings were not *sins of youth*, but deliberate works of one well-advanced in life, overflowing at once with flattery to a great man of great interest in the Church, and with unjust and acrimonious abuse of two men of eminent merit; and that, though it would have been unreasonable to expect an humiliating recantation, no apology whatever has been made in the cool of the evening, for the oppressive fervour of the heat of the day; no slight relenting indication has appeared in any note, or any corner of later publications; it is not fair to understand him as superciliously persevering? When he allows the shafts to remain in the wounds, and will not stretch forth a lenient hand, is it wrong, is it not generous to become an indignant avenger?

entertained. He carries you round and round, without carrying you forward to the point; but then you have no wish to be carried forward." He said to the Reverend Mr. Strahan, "Warburton is perhaps the last man who has written with a mind full of reading and reflection." 1781. Ætat. 72.

It is remarkable, that in the Life of Broome, Johnson takes notice of Dr. Warburton using a mode of expression which he himself used, and that not seldom, to the great offence of those who did not know him. Having occasion to mention a note, stating the different parts which were executed by the associated translators of "The Odyssey," he says, "Dr. Warburton told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note *a lie.* The language is *warm* indeed; and, I must own, cannot be justified in consistency with a decent regard to the established forms of speech. Johnson had accustomed himself to use the word *lie*, to express a mistake or an errour in relation; in short, when the *thing was not so as told*, though the relator did not *mean* to deceive. When he thought there was intentional falsehood in the relator, his expression was, "He *lies*, and he *knows* he *lies*."

Speaking of Pope's not having been known to excel in conversation, Johnson observes, that, "traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, or sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, wise or merry; and that one apophthegm only is recorded." In this respect, Pope differed widely from Johnson, whose conversation was, perhaps, more admirable than even his writings, however excellent. Mr. Wilkes has, however, favoured me with one repartee of Pope, of which Johnson was

1781. Ætat. 72. not informed. Johnson, after justly censuring him for having "nursed in his mind a foolish dis-esteem of Kings," tells us, "yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, *how he could love a Prince, while he disliked Kings?*" The answer which Pope made, was, "The young lion is harmless, and even playful; but when his claws are full grown he becomes cruel, dreadful and mischievous."

But although we have no collection of Pope's sayings, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he was not agreeable in social intercourse; for Johnson has been heard to say, that "the happiest conversation is that of which nothing is distinctly remembered, but a general effect of pleasing impression." The late Lord Somerville,[2] who saw much both of great and brilliant life, told me, that he had dined in company with Pope, and that after dinner the *little man*, as he called him, drank his bottle of Burgundy, and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.

I cannot withhold from my great friend a censure

[2] [James Lord Somerville, who died in 1766. M.]

Let me here express my grateful remembrance of Lord Somerville's kindness to me, at a very early period. He was the first person of high rank that took particular notice of me in the way most flattering to a young man fondly ambitious of being distinguished for his literary talents; and by the honour of his encouragement made me think well of myself, and aspire to deserve it better. He had a happy art of communicating his varied knowledge of the world, in short remarks and anecdotes, with a quiet pleasant gravity, that was exceedingly engaging. Never shall I forget the hours which I enjoyed with him at his apartments in the Royal Palace of Holy-Rood House, and at his seat near Edinburgh, which he himself had formed with an elegant taste.

of at least culpable inattention, to a nobleman, who, 1781. Ætat. 72.
it has been shewn, behaved to him with uncommon politeness. He says, "Except Lord Bathurst, none of Pope's noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity." This will not apply to Lord Mansfield, who was not ennobled in Pope's life time; but Johnson should have recollected, that Lord Marchmont was one of those noble friends. He includes his Lordship along with Lord Bolingbroke, in a charge of neglect of the papers which Pope left by his will; when, in truth, as I myself pointed out to him, before he wrote that poet's life, the papers were "committed to *the sole care and judgement* of Lord Bolingbroke, unless he (Lord Bolingbroke) shall not survive me;" so that Lord Marchmont had no concern whatever with them. After the first edition of the Lives, Mr. Malone, whose love of justice is equal to his accuracy, made, in my hearing, the same remark to Johnson; yet he omitted to correct the erroneous statement.[3] These particulars I mention, in the belief that there was only forgetfulness in my friend; but I owe this much to the Earl of Marchmont's reputation, who, were there no other memorials, will be immortalized by that line of Pope, in the verses on his Grotto:

"And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul."

[3] [This neglect, however, assuredly did not arise from any ill-will towards Lord Marchmont, but from inattention; just as he neglected to correct the statement concerning the family of Thomson, the poet, after it had been shewn to be erroneous. M.]

[1781.
Ætat. 72.

Various Reading in the Life of Pope.

"[Somewhat free] *sufficiently bold* in his criticism.

"All the gay [niceties] *varieties* of diction.

"Strikes the imagination with far [more] *greater* force.

"It is [probably] *certainly* the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen.

"Every sheet enabled him to write the next with [less trouble] *more facility*.

"No man sympathizes with [vanity depressed] *the sorrows of vanity*.

"It had been [criminal] *less easily excused*.

"When he [threatened to lay down] *talked of laying down* his pen.

"Society [is so named emphatically in opposition to] *politically regulated, is a state contra-distinguished from* a state of nature.

"A fictitious life of an [absurd] *infatuated* scholar.

"A foolish [contempt, disregard,] *disesteem* of Kings.

"His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows [were like those of other mortals] *acted strongly upon his mind*.

"Eager to pursue knowledge and attentive to [accumulate] *retain it*.

"A mind [excursive] *active*, ambitious, and adventurous.

"In its [noblest] *widest* searches still longing to go forward.

"He wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few [neglects] *hazards*.

"The [reasonableness] *justice* of my determination. 1781. Ætat. 72.

"A [favourite] *delicious* employment of the poets.

"More terrifick and more powerful [beings] *phantoms* perform on the stormy ocean.

"The inventor of [those] *this* petty [beings] *nation.*

"The [mind] *heart* naturally loves truth."

In the Life of ADDISON we find an unpleasing account of his having lent Steele a hundred pounds, and "reclaimed his loan by an execution." In the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, the authenticity of this anecdote is denied. But Mr. Malone has obliged me with the following note concerning it:—

"Many persons having doubts concerning this fact, I applied to Dr. Johnson, to learn on what authority he asserted it. He told me, he had it from Savage, who lived in intimacy with Steele, and who mentioned, that Steele told him the story with tears in his eyes.—Ben Victor, Dr. Johnson said, likewise informed him of this remarkable transaction, from the relation of Mr. Wilkes the comedian, who was also an intimate of Steele's.[4]—Some in defence of Addison, have said, that 'the act was done with the good natured view of rousing Steele, and correcting that profusion which always made him necessitous.' —'If that were the case, (said Johnson,) and that he only wanted to alarm Steele, he would afterwards

[4] [The late Mr. Burke informed me, in 1792, that Lady Dorothea Primrose, who died at a great age, I think in 1768, and had been well acquainted with Steele, told him the same story. M.]

1781. Ætat. 72. have *returned* the money to his friend, which it is not pretended he did.'—'This, too, (he added,) might be retorted by an advocate for Steele, who might alledge, that he did not repay the loan *intentionally*, merely to see whether Addison would be mean and ungenerous enough to make use of legal process to recover it. But of such speculations there is no end: we cannot dive into the hearts of men; but their actions are open to observation.'

"I then mentioned to him that some people thought that Mr. Addison's character was so pure, that the fact, *though true*, ought to have been suppressed. He saw no reason for this. 'If nothing but the bright side of characters should be shewn, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in *any thing*. The sacred writers (he observed) related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men; which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*, into which otherwise they would naturally fall, where they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven."

"March 15, 1782. E. M."

The last paragraph of this note is of great importance; and I request that my readers may consider it with particular attention. It will be afterwards refered to in this work.

Various readings in the life of ADDISON.

"[But he was our first example] *He was, however, one of our earliest examples* of correctness.

1781. Ætat. 72.

"And [overlook] *despise* their masters.

"His instructions were such as the [state] *character* of his [own time] *readers* made [necessary] *proper*.

"His purpose was to [diffuse] *infuse* literary curiosity by gentle and unsuspected conveyance [among] *into* the gay, the idle, and the wealthy.

"Framed rather for those that [wish] *are learning* not to write.

"Domestick [manners] *scenes*."

In his life of PARNELL, I wonder that Johnson omitted to insert an Epitaph which he had long before composed for that amiable man, without ever writing it down, but which he was so good as, at my request, to dictate to me, by which means it has been preserved.

"*Hic requiescit* THOMAS PARNELL, *S. T. P.*

"*Qui sacerdos pariter et poeta,*
"*Utrasque partes ita implevit,*
"*Ut neque sacerdoti suavitas poetæ,*
"*Nec poetæ sacerdotis sanctitas, deesset.*"

Various readings in the Life of PARNELL.

"About three years [after] *afterwards*.

"[Did not much want] *was in no great need of* improvement.

"But his prosperity *did not last long* [was clouded with that which took away all his powers of enjoying either profit or pleasure, the death of his wife, whom he is said to have lamented with such sorrow, as

1781. Ætat. 72. hastened his end.[5]] His end, whatever was the cause, was now approaching.

"In the Hermit, the [composition] *narrative*, as it is less airy, is less pleasing."

In the Life of BLACKMORE, we find that writer's reputation generously cleared by Johnson from the cloud of prejudice which the malignity of contemporary wits had raised around it. In this spirited exertion of justice, he has been imitated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his praise of the architecture of Vanburgh.

We trace Johnson's own character in his observations on Blackmore's "magnanimity as an authour." —"The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself." Johnson, I recollect, once told me, laughing heartily, that he understood it had been said of him, "He *appears* not to feel; but when he is *alone*, depend upon it, he *suffers sadly*." I am as certain as I can be of any man's real sentiments, that he *enjoyed* the perpetual shower of little hostile arrows as evidences of his fame.

Various readings in the Life of BLACKMORE.

"To [set] *engage* poetry [on the side] *in the cause* of virtue.

"He likewise [established] *enforced* the truth of Revelation.

[5] I should have thought that Johnson who had felt the severe affliction from which Parnell never recovered, would have preserved this passage.

[He omitted it, doubtless, because he afterwards learned that, however he might have lamented his wife, his end was hastened by other means. M.]

" [Kindness] *benevolence* was ashamed to favour.

" His practice, which was once [very extensive] *invidiously great.*

" There is scarcely any distemper of dreadful name [of] which he has not [shewn] *taught his reader* how [it is to be opposed] *to oppose.*

" Of this [contemptuous] *indecent* arrogance.

" [He wrote] *but produced* likewise a work of a different kind.

" At least [written] *compiled* with integrity.

" Faults which many tongues [were desirous] *would have made haste* to publish.

" But though he [had not] *could not boast of* much critical knowledge.

" He [used] *waited for* no felicities of fancy.

" Or had ever elated his [mind] *views* born to that ideal perfection which every [mind] *genius* born to excel is condemned always to pursue and never overtake.

" The [first great] *fundamental* principle of wisdom and of virtue.

Various readings in the Life of PHILIPS.

" His dreadful [rival] *antagonist* Pope.

" They [have not often much] *are not loaded with* thought.

" In his translation from Pindar, he [will not be denied to have reached] *found the art of reaching* all the obscurity of the Theban bard."

Various readings in the Life of CONGREVE.

" Congreve's conversation must sruely have been *at least* equally pleasing with his writings.

1781. Ætat. 72.

"It apparently [requires] *pre-supposes* a familiar knowledge of many characters.

"Reciprocation of [similes] *conceits.*

"The dialogue is quick and [various] *sparkling.*

"Love for Love; a comedy [more drawn from life] *of nearer alliance to life.*

"The general character of his miscellanies is, that they shew little wit and [no] *little* virtue.

"[Perhaps] *certainly* he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyrick poetry."

Various readings in the Life of TICKELL.

["Longed] *long wished* to peruse it.

"At the [accession] *arrival* of King George.

"Fiction [unnaturally] *unskilfully* compounded of Grecian deities and Gothick fairies."

Various readings in the Life of AKENSIDE.

"For [another] *a different* purpose.

"[A furious] *an unnecessary* and outrageous zeal.

"[Something which] *what* he called and thought liberty.

"A [favourer of innovation] *lover of contradiction.*

"Warburton's [censure] *objections.*

"His rage [for liberty] *of patriotism.*

"Mr. Dyson with [a zeal] *an ardour* of friendship.

In the Life of LYTTELTON, Johnson seems to have been not favourably disposed towards that nobleman. Mrs. Thrale suggests that he was offended by *Molly Aston's* preference of his Lordship to him.[6] I can

[6] Let not my readers smile to think of Johnson's being a candidate for female favour; Mr. Peter Garrick assured me, that he was told by a lady, that in her opinion Johnson was "a very *seducing*

by no means join in the censure bestowed by Johnson on his Lordship, whom he calls "poor Lyttelman." Disadvantages of person and manner may be forgotten, where intellectual pleasure is communicated to a susceptible mind; and that Johnson was capable of feeling the most delicate and disinterested attachment, appears from the following letter, which is published by Mrs. Thrale, with some others to the same person, of which the excellence is not so apparent: 1781. Ætat. 72.

"TO MISS BOOTHBY.

"DEAREST MADAM, January, 1775.

"THOUGH I am afraid your illness leaves you little leisure for the reception of airy civilities, yet I cannot forbear to pay you my congratulations on the new year; and to declare my wishes that your years to come may be many and happy. In this wish, indeed, I include myself, who have none but you on whom my heart reposes; yet surely I wish your good, even though your situation were such as should permit you to communicate no gratifications to, dearest, dearest Madam,

"Your, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

[There is still a slight mistake in the text. It was not Molly Aston, but Hill Boothby, for whose affections Johnson and Lord Lyttelton were rival candidates. See Mrs. Piozzi's "Anecdotes," p. 160. After mentioning the death of Mrs. Fitzherbert (who was a daughter of Mr. Meynell of Bradley in Derbyshire,) and Johnson's high admiration of her, she adds, "The friend of this lady, Miss Boothby, succeeded her in the management of Mr. Fitzherbert's family, and in the esteem of Dr. Johnson; though he told me, she pushed her piety to bigotry, her devotion to enthusiasm; that she somewhat disqualified herself for the duties of *this* life, by her perpetual aspirations after the *next*: such was, however, the purity of her mind, he said, and such the graces of her manner, that Lord Lyttelton and he used to strive for her preference with an emulation that occasioned hourly disgust, and ended in lasting animosity. You may see (said he to me, when the Poets' Lives were printed,) that dear Boothby is at my heart still."

Miss Hill Boothby, who was the only daughter of Brook Boothby, Esq. and his wife, Elizabeth Fitzherbert, was somewhat older

1781. ton," for returning thanks to the Critical Reviewers, Ætat. 72. for having "kindly commended" his "*Dialogues of the Dead.*" Such "acknowledgements (says my friend) never can be proper, since, they must be paid either for flattery or for justice." In my opinion, the most upright man, who has been tried on a false accusation, may, when he is acquitted, make a bow to his jury. And when those, who are so much the arbiters of literary merit, as in a considerable degree to influence the publick opinion, review an authour's work, *placido lumine*, when I am afraid mankind in general are better pleased with severity, he may surely express a grateful sense of their civility.

than Johnson. She was born October 27, 1708, and died January 16, 1756. Six Letters addressed to her by Johnson in the year 1755, are printed in Mrs. Piozzi's Collection; and a Prayer composed by him on her death may be found in his "Prayers and Meditations." His affection for her induced him to preserve and bind up in a volume thirty three of her Letters, which were purchased from the widow of his servant, Francis Barber, and published by R. Phillips, in 1805.

But highly as he valued this lady, his attachment to Miss *Molly* Aston, (afterwards Mrs. Brodie,) appears to have been still more ardent. He burned (says Mrs. Piozzi,) many letters in the last week [of his life], I am told, and those written by his mother drew from him a flood of tears, when the paper they were written on was all consumed. Mr. Sastres saw him cast a melancholy look upon their ashes, which he took up and examined, to see if a word was still legible.—Nobody has ever mentioned what became of Miss Aston's letters, though he once told me himself, they should be the last papers he would destroy, and added these lines with a very faultering voice:

"Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
"And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
"Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
"The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more."

Additions to Mrs. Piozzi's Collection of
Dr. Johnson's Letters. M.]

Various Readings in the Life of LYTTELTON. 1782. Ætat. 71.

"He solaced [himself] *his grief* by writing a long poem to her memory.

"The production rather [of a mind that means well than thinks vigorously] *as it seems of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions.*

"His last literary [work] *production.*

"[Found the way] *undertook* to persuade.

As the introduction to his critical examination of the genius and writings of YOUNG, he did Mr. Herbert Croft, then a Barrister of Lincoln's Inn, now a clergyman, the honour to adopt a Life of Young written by that Gentleman, who was the friend of Dr. Young's son, and wished to vindicate him from some very erroneous remarks to his prejudice. Mr. Croft's performance was subjected to the revision of Dr. Johnson, as appears from the following note to Mr. John Nichols:[7]

"This Life of Dr. Young was written by a friend of his son. What is crossed with black is expunged by the authour, what is crossed with red is expunged by me. If you find any thing more that can be well omitted, I shall not be sorry to see it yet shorter."

It has always appeared to me to have a considerable share of merit, and to display a pretty successful imitation of Johnson's style. When I mentioned this to a very eminent literary character,[8] he opposed me vehemently, exclaiming, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." This was an image so happy, that

[7] Gentlemen's Magazine, Vol. iv. p. 10.

[8] [The late Mr. Burke. M.]

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARAS...

1781. Ætat. 72. one might have thought he would have been satisfied with it; but he was not. And setting his mind again to work, he added, with exquisite felicity, "It has all the contortions of the Sybil, without the inspiration."

Mr. Croft very properly guards us against supposing that Young was a gloomy man; and mentions, that "his parish was indebted to the good-humour of the authour of the '*Night Thoughts*' for an Assembly and a Bowling Green." A letter from a noble foreigner is quoted, in which he is said to have been "very pleasant in conversation."

Mr. Langton, who frequently visited him, informs me, that there was an air of benevolence in his manner, but that he could obtain from him less information than he had hoped to receive from one who had lived so much in intercourse with the brightest men of what has been called the Augustan age of England; and that he shewed a degree of eager curiosity concerning the common occurrences that were then passing, which appeared somewhat remarkable in a man of such intellectual stores, of such an advanced age, and who had retired from life with declared disappointment in his expectations.

An instance at once of his pensive turn of mind, and his cheerfulness of temper, appeared in a little story which he himself told to Mr. Langton, when they were walking in his garden: "Here (said he) I had put a handsome sun-dial, with this inscription, *Eheu fugaces!* which (speaking with a smile) was sadly verified, for by the next morning my dial had been carried off."[9]

[9] The late Mr. James Ralph told Lord Macartney, that he passed an evening with Dr. Young at Lord Melcombe's (then Mr. Dod-

1781. Ætat. 72.

It gives me much pleasure to observe, that however Johnson may have casually talked, yet when he sits, as "an ardent judge zealous to his trust, giving sentence" upon the excellent works of Young, he allows them the high praise to which they are justly entitled. "The *Universal Passion* (says he) is indeed a very great performance,—his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth."

But I was most anxious concerning Johnson's decision upon "NIGHT THOUGHTS," which I esteem as a mass of the grandest and richest poetry that human genius has ever produced: and was delighted to find this character of that work: "In his 'NIGHT THOUGHTS,' he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflection and striking allusions: a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhime, but with disadvantage." And afterwards, "Particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity."

But there is in this Poem not only all that Johnson so well brings in view, but a power of the *Pathetick* beyond almost any example that I have seen. He who does not feel his nerves shaken, and his heart

dington) at Hammersmith. The Doctor happening to go out into the garden, Mr. Doddington observed to him, on his return, that it was a dreadful night, as in truth it was, there being a violent storm of rain and wind. 'No, Sir, (replied the Doctor) it is a very fine night. THE LORD is abroad.'

1781. Ætat. 72. pierced by many passages in this extraordinary work, particularly by that most affecting one, which describes the gradual torment suffered by the contemplation of an object of affectionate attachment visibly and certainly decaying into dissolution, must be of a hard and obstinate frame.

To all the other excellencies of 'NIGHT THOUGHTS' let me add the great and peculiar one, that they contain not only the noblest sentiments of virtue, and contemplations on immortality, but the *Christian Sacrifice*, the *Divine Propitiation*, with all its interesting circumstances, and consolations to " a wounded spirit," solemnly and poetically displayed in such imagery and language, as cannot fail to exalt, animate, and soothe the truly pious. No book whatever can be recommended to young persons, with better hopes of seasoning their minds with *vital religion*, than YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS."

In the Life of SWIFT, it appears to me that Johnson had a certain degree of prejudice against that extraordinary man, of which I have elsewhere had occasion to speak. Mr. Thomas Sheridan imputed it to a supposed apprehension in Johnson, that Swift had not been sufficiently active in obtaining for him an Irish degree when it was solicited[1] but of this there was not sufficient evidence; and let me not presume to charge Johnson with injustice, because he did not think so highly of the writings of this authour, as I have done from my youth upwards. Yet that he had an unfavourable bias is evident, were it only from that passage in which he speaks of Swift's practice of saving, as, " first ridiculous and at last

[1] See Vol. I. page. 108.

detestable;" and yet after some examination of circumstances, finds himself obliged to own, that "it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give." 1781. Ætat. 72.

One observation which Johnson makes in Swift's life, should be often inculcated: "It may be justly supposed, that there was in his conversation what appears so frequently in his letters, an affectation of familiarity with the great, an ambition of momentary equality, sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul; but a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension."

Various Readings in the Life of SWIFT.

"Charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written by a man of *a* peculiar [opinons] *character*, without ill intention.

"He did not [disown] *deny* it.

"[To] *by* whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was [indebted for] *advanced to* his benefices.

"[With] *for* this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley.

"Sharpe, when he [represents] *describes* as 'the harmless tool of others' hate.'

"Harley was slow because he was [irresolute] *doubtful*.

1781. Ætat. 72.

"When [readers were not many] *we were not yet a nation of readers.*

"[Every man who] *he that could say he* knew him.

"Every man of known influence has so many [more] petitions [than] *which* he [can] *cannot* grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he [can gratify] *gratifies.*

"Ecclesiastical [preferments] *benefices.*

"Swift [procured] *contrived* an interview.

"[As a writer] *In his works* he has given very different specimens.

"On all common occasions he habitually [assumes] *affects* a style of [superiority] *arrogance.*

"By the [omission] *neglect* of those ceremonies.

"That their merits filled the world [and] *or that* there was no [room for] *hope of* more."

I have not confined myself to the order of the "Lives," in making my few remarks. Indeed a different order is observed in the original publication, and in the collection of Johnson's Works. And should it be objected, that many of my various readings are inconsiderable, those who make an objection will be pleased to consider, that such small particulars are intended for those who are nicely critical in composition, to whom they will be an acceptable selection.

"Spence's Anecdotes," which are frequently quoted and referred to in Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," are in a manuscript collection, made by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Spence,[2] containing a number

[2] [The Rev. Joseph Spence, A. M. Rector of Great Harwood in Buckinghamshire, and Prebendary of Durham, died at Byfleet in Surrey, August 20, 1768. He was a fellow of New College in Oxford, and held the office of Professor of Poetry in that University from 1728 to 1738. M.]

of particulars concerning eminent men. To each anecdote is marked the name of the person on whose authority it is mentioned. This valuable collection is the property of the Duke of Newcastle, who upon the application of Sir Lucas Pepys, was pleased to permit it to be put into the hands of Dr. Johnson, who I am sorry to think made but an awkward return. "Great assistance (says he) has been given me by Mr. Spence's Collection, of which I consider the communication as a favour worthy of publick acknowledgement;" but he has not owned to whom he was obliged; so that the acknowledgement is unappropriated to his Grace.

While the world in general was filled with admiration of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and from which attacks of different sorts issued against him.[3] By some violent Whigs he was arraigned of injustice to Milton; by some Cambridge men of depreciating Gray; and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montagu, the ingenious Essayist on Shakspeare, between whom and his Lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on. In

[3] From this disreputable class, I except an ingenious, though not satisfactory defence of HAMMOND, which I did not see till lately, by the favour of its authour, my amiable friend, the Reverend Mr. Bevill, who published it without his name. It is a juvenile performance, but elegantly written, with classical enthusiasm of sentiment, and yet with a becoming modesty, and great respect for Dr. Johnson.

1781. Ætat. 72. this war the smallest powers in alliance with him were of course led to engage, at least on the defensive, and thus I for one, was excluded from the enjoyment of "A Feast for Reason," such as Mr. Cumberland has described, with a keen, yet just and delicate pen, in his "OBSERVER." These minute inconveniencies gave not the least disturbance to Johnson. He nobly said, when I talked to him of the feeble, though shrill outcry which had been raised, "Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely; let them shew where they think me wrong."

While my friend is thus contemplated in the splendour derived from his last and perhaps most admirable work, I introduce him with peculiar propriety as the correspondent of WARREN HASTINGS! a man whose regard reflects dignity even upon JOHNSON; a man, the extent of whose abilities was equal to that of his power; and who, by those who are fortunate enough to know him in private life, is admired for his literature and taste, and beloved for the candour, moderation, and mildness of his character. Were I capable of paying a suitable tribute of admiration to him, I should certainly not withhold it at a moment[4] when it is not possible that I should be suspected of being an interested flatterer. But how weak would be my voice after that of the millions whom he governed. His condescending and obliging compliance with my solicitation, I with humble gratitude acknowledge; and while by publishing his letter to me, accompanying the valuable communication, I do eminent honour to my great friend, I shall entirely disregard any invidious suggestions, that as I in some

[4] January, 1791.

degree participate in the honour, I have, at the same time, the gratification of my own vanity in view. 1781. Ætat. 72.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"SIR, Park-lane, Dec. 2, 1790.

"I HAVE been fortunately spared the troublesome suspense of a long search, to which, in performance of my promise, I had devoted this morning, by lighting upon the objects of it among the first papers that I laid my hands on: my veneration for your great and good friend, Dr. Johnson, and the pride, or I hope something of a better sentiment, which I indulge in possessing such memorials of his good will towards me, having induced me to bind them in a parcel containing other select papers, and labelled with the titles appertaining to them. They consist but of three letters, which I believe were all that I ever received from Dr. Johnson. Of these, one, which was written in quadruplicate, under the different dates of its respective dispatches, has already been made publick, but not from any communication of mine. This, however, I have joined to the rest; and have now the pleasure of sending them to you for the use to which you informed me it was your desire to destine them.

"My promise was pledged with the condition, that if the letters were found to contain any thing which should render them improper for the publick eye, you would dispense with the performance of it. You will have the goodness, I am sure, to pardon my recalling this stipulation to your recollection, as I shall be loath to appear negligent of that obligation which is always implied in an epistolary confidence. In the reservation of that right I have read them over

1781. Ætat. 72: with the most scrupulous attention, but have not seen in them the slightest cause on that ground to withhold them from you. But, though not on that, yet on another ground I own I feel a little, yet but a little, reluctance to part with them: I mean on that of my own credit, which I fear will suffer by the information conveyed by them, that I was early in the possession of such valuable instructions for the beneficial employment of the influence of my late station, and (as it may seem) have so little availed myself of them. Whether I could, if it were necessary, defend myself against such an imputation, it little concerns the world to know. I look only to the effect which these relicks may produce, considered as evidences of the virtues of their authour: and believing that they will be found to display an uncommon warmth of private friendship, and a mind ever attentive to the improvement and extension of useful knowledge, and solicitous for the interests of mankind, I can cheerfully submit to the little sacrifice of my own fame, to contribute to the illustration of so great and venerable a character. They cannot be better applied, for that end, than by being entrusted to your hands. Allow me, with this offering, to infer from it a proof of the very great esteem with which I have the honour to profess myself, Sir,

"Your most obedient
"And most humble servant,
"WARREN HASTINGS."

"*P. S.* At some future time, and when you have no further occasion for these papers, I shall be obliged to you if you will return them."

The last of the three letters thus graciously put

into my hands, and which has already appeared in publick, belongs to this year; but I shall previously insert the first two in the order of their dates. They altogether form a grand group in my biographical picture. 1781. Ætat. 72.

"TO THE HONOURABLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

"SIR,

"THOUGH I have had but little personal knowledge of you, I have had enough to make me wish for more; and though it be now a long time since I was honoured by your visit, I had too much pleasure from it to forget it. By those whom we delight to remember, we are unwilling to be forgotten; and therefore I cannot omit this opportunity of reviving myself in your memory by a letter which you will receive from the hands of my friend Mr. Chambers;[5] a man, whose purity of manners and vigour of mind are sufficient to make every thing welcome that he brings.

"That this is my only reason for writing, will be too apparent by the uselessness of my letter to any other purpose. I have no questions to ask; not that I want curiosity after either the ancient or present state of regions, in which have been seen all the power and splendour of wide-extended empire; and which, as by some grant of natural superiority, supply the rest of the world with almost all that pride desires, and luxury enjoys. But my knowledge of them is too scanty to furnish me with proper topicks of enquiry; I can only wish for information; and hope,

[5] Afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of his Majesty's Judges in India.

1781. Ætat. 72. that a mind comprehensive like yours will find leisure, amidst the cares of your important station, to enquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope, that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language, will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men, from whom very little has been hitherto derived.

"You, Sir, have no need of being told by me, how much may be added by your attention and patronage to experimental knowledge and natural history. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside, which are yet very imperfectly known here, either to artificers or philosophers. Of the natural productions, animate and inanimate, we yet have so little intelligence, that our books are filled, I fear, with conjectures about things which an Indian peasant knows by his senses.

"Many of those things my first wish is to see; my second to know, by such accounts as a man like you will be able to give.

"As I have not skill to ask proper questions, I have likewise no such access to great men as can enable me to send you any political information. Of the agitations of an unsettled government, and the struggles of a feeble ministry, care is doubtless taken to give you more exact accounts than I can obtain. If you are inclined to interest yourself much in publick

transactions, it is no misfortune to you to be distant from them. 1781. Ætat. 72.

"That literature is not totally forsaking us, and that your favourite language is not neglected, will appear from the book,[6] which I should have pleased myself more with sending, if I could have presented it bound: but time was wanting. I beg, however, Sir, that you will accept it from a man very desirous of your regard; and that if you think me able to gratify you by any thing more important you will employ me.

"I am now going to take leave, perhaps a very long leave, of my dear Mr. Chambers. That he is going to live where you govern, may justly alleviate the regard of parting; and the hope of seeing both him and you again, which I am not willing to mingle with doubt, must at present, comfort as it can, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"March 30, 1774. "Sam. Johnson."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

"Being informed that by the departure of a ship, there is now an opportunity of writing to Bengal, I am unwilling to slip out of your memory by my own negligence, and therefore take the liberty of reminding you of my existence, by sending you a book which is not yet made publick.

"I have lately visited a region less remote, and less illustrious than India, which afforded some occasions for speculation; what has occurred to me, I

[6] Jones's "Persian Grammar."

1781. Ætat. 72. have put into the volume,[7] of which I beg your acceptance.

"Men in your station seldom have presents totally disinterested; my book is received, let me now make my request.

"There is, Sir, somewhere within your government, a young adventurer, one Chauncey Lawrence, whose father is one of my oldest friends. Be pleased to shew the young man what countenance is fit, whether he wants to be restrained by your authority, or encouraged by your favour. His father is now President of the College of Physicians, a man venerable for his knowledge, and more venerable for his virtue.

"I wish you a prosperous government, a safe return, and a long enjoyment of plenty and tranquillity.

"I am, Sir,
"Your most obedient
"And most humble servant,
"London, Dec. 20, 1774. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR, "Jan. 9, 1781.

"AMIDST the importance and multiplicity of affairs in which your great office engages you, I take the liberty of recalling your attention for a moment to literature, and will not prolong the interruption by an apology which your character makes needless.

"Mr. Hoole, a gentleman long known, and long esteemed in the India-House, after having translated

[7] "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."

Tasso, has undertaken Ariosto. How well he is 1781.
qualified for his undertaking he has already shewn. Ætat. 72.
He is desirous, Sir, of your favour in promoting his proposals, and flatters me by supposing that my testimony may advance his interest.

"It is a new thing for a clerk of the India-House to translate poets;—it is new for a Governor of Bengal to patronize learning. That he may find his ingenuity rewarded, and that learning may flourish under your protection, is the wish of, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

I wrote to him in February, complaining of having been troubled by a recurrence of the perplexing question of Liberty and Necessity;—and mentioning that I hoped soon to meet him again in London.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery. What have you to do with Liberty and Necessity? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it? Do not doubt but I shall be most heartily glad to see you here again, for I love every part about you but your affectation of distress.

"I have at last finished my Lives, and have laid up for you a load of copy, all out of order, so that it will amuse you a long time to set it right. Come to me, my dear Bozzy, and let us be as happy as we

1781. Ætat. 72. can. We will go again to the Mitre, and talk old times over.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours affectionately,

"March 14, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Monday, March 19, I arrived in London, and on Tuesday, the 20th, met him in Fleet-street, walking, or rather indeed moving along; for his peculiar march is thus described in a very just and picturesque manner, in a short Life[8] of him published very soon after his death:—"When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet." That he was often much stared at while he advanced in this manner, may easily be believed; but it was not safe to make sport of one so robust as he was. Mr. Langton saw him one day, in a fit of absence, by a sudden start, drive the load off a porter's back, and walk forward briskly, without being conscious of what he had done. The porter was very angry, but stood still, and eyed the huge figure with much earnestness, till he was satisfied that his wisest course was to be quiet, and take up his burthen again.

Our accidental meeting in the street after a long

[8] Published by Kearsley, with this well-chosen motto:

"——— ——— From his cradle
"He was a SCHOLAR, and a ripe and good one:
"And to add greater honours to his age
"Than man could give him, he died fearing Heaven."

SHAKSPEARE.

separation, was a pleasing surprize to us both. He 1781. Ætat. 72.
stepped aside with me into Falcon-court, and made kind enquiries about my family, and as we were in a hurry going different ways, I promised to call on him next day; he said he was engaged to go out in the morning. "Early, Sir?" said I. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a London morning does not go with the sun."

I waited on him next evening, and he gave me a great portion of his original manuscript of his 'Lives of the Poets,' which he had preserved for me.

I found on visiting his friend, Mr. Thrale, that he was now very ill, and had removed, I suppose by the solicitation of Mrs. Thrale, to a house in Grosvenor-square. I was sorry to see him sadly changed in his appearance.

He told me I might now have the pleasure to see Dr. Johnson drink wine again, for he had lately returned to it. When I mentioned this to Johnson, he said, "I drink it now sometimes, but not socially." The first evening that I was with him at Thrale's, I observed he poured a large quantity of it into a glass, and swallowed it greedily. Every thing about his character and manners was forcible and violent; there never was any moderation; many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously. He could practise abstinence, but not temperance.

Mrs. Thrale and I had a dispute, whether Shakspeare or Milton had drawn the most admirable picture of a man.[9] I was for Shakspeare; Mrs. Thrale

[9] Shakspeare makes Hamlet thus describe his father:
" See what a grace was seated on this brow:
" Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,

1781. Ætat. 72. for Milton; and after a fair hearing, Johnson decided for my opinion.[1]

I told him of one of Mr. Burke's playful sallies upon Dean Marlay:[2] "I don't like the Deanery of *Ferns*, it sounds so like a *barren* title."—"Dr. *Heath* should have it;" said I. Johnson laughed, and condescending to trifle in the same mode of conceit, suggested Dr. *Moss*.

He said, "Mrs. Montagu has dropt me. Now, Sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by." He certainly was vain of the society of ladies, and could make himself very agreeable to them, when he chose it; Sir Joshua Reynolds agreed with me that he could. Mr. Gibbon, with his usual sneer, controverted it, perhaps in resentment of Johnson's having talked with some disgust of his ugliness, which one would

"An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
"A station like the herald, Mercury,
"New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
"A combination, and a form, indeed,
"Where every God did seem to set his seal,
"To give the world assurance of a man."

Milton thus pourtrays our first parent, Adam:
"His fair large front and eye sublime declar'd
"Absolute rule; and hyacinthin locks
"Round from his parted forelock manly hung
"Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

[1] [It is strange, that the picture drawn by the unlearned Shakspeare, should be full of classical images, and that by the learned Milton, void of them.—Milton's description appears to me more picturesque. K.]

[2] [Dr. Richard Marlay, afterwards Lord Bishop of Waterford; a very amiable, benevolent, and ingenious man. He was chosen a member of the LITERARY CLUB in 1777, and died in Dublin, July 2, 1802, in his 75th year. M.]

think a *philosopher* would not mind. Dean Marlay wittily observed, "A lady may be vain, when she can turn a wolf-dog into a lap-dog." 1781. Ætat. 72.

The election for Ayrshire, my own county, was this spring tried upon a petition, before a Committee of the House of Commons. I was one of the Counsel for the sitting member, and took the liberty of previously stating different points to Johnson, who never failed to see them clearly, and to supply me with some good hints. He dictated to me the following note upon the registration of deeds:

"All laws are made for the convenience of the community; what is legally done, should be legally recorded, that the state of things may be known, and that wherever evidence is requisite, evidence may be had. For this reason, the obligation to frame and establish a legal register is enforced by a legal penalty, which penalty is the want of that perfection and plenitude of right which a register would give. Thence it follows, that this is not an objection merely legal; for the reason on which the law stands being equitable, makes it an equitable objection."

"This (said he) you must enlarge on, when speaking to the Committee. You must not argue there, as if you were arguing in the schools; close reasoning will not fix their attention; you must say the same thing over and over again, in different words. If you say it but once, they miss it in a moment of inattention. It is unjust, Sir, to censure lawyers for multiplying words, when they argue; it is often *necessary* for them to multiply words."

His notion of the duty of a member of Parliament,

1781. Ætat. 72. sitting upon an election-committee was very high; and when he was told of a gentleman upon one of those committees, who read the newspapers part of the time, and slept the rest, while the merits of a vote were examined by the counsel; and as an excuse, when challenged by the chairman for such behaviour, bluntly answered, "I had made up my mind upon that case;"—Johnson, with an indignant contempt, said, "If he was such a rogue as to make up his mind upon a case without hearing it, he should not have been such a fool as to tell it."—"I think (said Mr. Dudley Long, now North) the Doctor has pretty plainly made him out to be both rogue and fool."

Johnson's profound reverence for the Hierarchy made him expect from Bishops the highest degree of decorum; he was offended even at their going to taverns; "A bishop (said he) has nothing to do at a tippling-house. It is not indeed immoral in him to go to a tavern; neither would it be immoral in him to whip a top in Grosvenor-square: but, if he did, I hope the boys would fall upon him, and apply the whip to *him*. There are gradations in conduct; there is morality,—decency,—propriety. None of these should be violated by a bishop. A bishop should not go to a house where he may meet a young fellow leading out a wench." Boswell. "But, Sir, every tavern does not admit women." Johnson. "Depend upon it, Sir, any tavern will admit a well-drest man and a well-drest woman; they will not perhaps admit a woman whom they see every night walking by their door, in the street. But a well-drest man may lead in a well-drest woman to any tavern in London. Taverns sell meat and drink, and

will sell them to any body who can eat and can drink. You may as well say, that a mercer will not sell silks to a woman of the town." 1781. Ætat. 72.

He also disapproved of bishops going to routs, at least of their staying at them longer than their presence commanded respect. He mentioned a particular bishop. "Poh! (said Mrs. Thrale) the Bishop of ——— is never minded at a rout." BOSWELL. "When a bishop places himself in a situation where he has no distinct character, and is of no consequence, he degrades the dignity of his order." JOHNSON. "Mr. Boswell, Madam, has said it as correctly as it could be."

Nor was it only in the dignitaries of the Church that Johnson required a particular decorum and delicacy of behaviour; he justly considered that the clergy, as persons set apart for the sacred office of serving at the altar, and impressing the minds of men with the aweful concerns of a future state, should be somewhat more serious than the generality of mankind, and have a suitable composure of manners. A due sense of the dignity of their profession, independent of higher motives, will ever prevent them from losing their distinction in an indiscriminate sociality; and did such as affect this, know how much it lessens them in the eyes of those whom they think to please by it, they would feel themselves much mortified.

Johnson, and his friend, Beauclerk, were once together in company with several clergymen, who thought that they should appear to advantage, by assuming the lax jollity of *men of the world*; which, as it may be observed in similar cases, they carried to noisy excess. Johnson, who they expected would

1781. Ætat. 72. be *entertained*, sat grave and silent for some time; at last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, "This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive."

Even the dress of a clergyman should be in character, and nothing can be more despicable than conceited attempts at avoiding the appearance of the clerical order; attempts, which are as ineffectual as they are pitiful. Dr. Porteus, now Bishop of London, in his excellent charge when presiding over the diocese of Chester, justly animadverts upon this subject; and observes of a reverend fop, that he "can be but *half a beau*."

Addison, in "The Spectator," has given us a fine portrait of a clergyman, who is supposed to be a member of his *Club*; and Johnson has exhibited a model, in the character of Mr. Mudge,[3] which has escaped the collectors of his works, but which he owned to me, and which indeed he shewed to Sir Joshua Reynolds at the time when it was written. It bears the genuine marks of Johnson's best manner, and is as follows:

"The Reverend Mr. *Zachariah Mudge*, Prebendary of Exeter, and Vicar of St. Andrew's in Plymouth; a man equally eminent for his virtues and abilities, and at once beloved as a companion and reverenced as a pastor. He had that general curiosity to which no kind of knowledge is indifferent or superfluous; and that general benevolence by which no order of men is hated or despised.

"His principles both of thought and action were great and comprehensive. By a solicitous examina-

[3] See Vol. I. p. 357.

tion of objections, and judicious comparison of opposite arguments, he attained what enquiry never gives but to industry and perspicuity, a firm and unshaken settlement of conviction. But his firmness was without asperity; for, knowing with how much difficulty truth was sometimes found, he did not wonder that many missed it. 1781. Ætat. 72.

"The general course of his life was determined by his profession; he studied the sacred volumes in the original languages; with what diligence and success, his *Notes upon the Psalms* give sufficient evidence. He once endeavoured to add the knowledge of Arabick to that of Hebrew; but finding his thoughts too much diverted from other studies, after some time desisted from his purpose.

"His discharge of parochial duties was exemplary. How his *Sermons* were composed, may be learned from the excellent volume which he has given to the publick; but how they were delivered, can be known only to those that heard them; for as he appeared in the pulpit, words will not easily describe him. His delivery, though unconstrained was not negligent, and though forcible was not turbulent; disdaining anxious nicety of emphasis, and laboured artifice of action, it captivated the hearer by its natural dignity, it roused the sluggish, and fixed the volatile, and detained the mind upon the subject, without directing it to the speaker.

"The grandeur and solemnity of the preacher did not intrude upon his general behaviour; at the table of his friends he was a companion communicative and attentive, of unaffected manners, of manly cheerfulness, willing to please, and easy to be pleased. His acquaintance was universally solicited, and his

1781. presence obstructed no enjoyment which religion did not forbid. Though studious he was popular; though argumentative he was modest; though inflexible he was candid; and though metaphysical yet orthodox."[4]

Ætat. 72.

On Friday, March 30, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with the Earl of Charlemont, Sir Annesley Stewart, Mr. Eliot, of Port-Eliot, Mr. Burke, Dean Marlay, Mr. Langton; a most agreeable day, of which I regret that every circumstance is not preserved; but it is unreasonable to require such a multiplication of felicity.

Mr. Eliot, with whom Dr. Walter Harte had travelled, talked to us of his "History of Gustavus Adolphus," which he said was a very good book in the German translation." JOHNSON. "Harte was excessively vain. He put copies of his book in manuscript into the hands of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Granville, that they might revise it. Now how absurd was it to suppose that two such noblemen would revise so big a manuscript. Poor man! he left London the day of the publication of his book, that he might be out of the way of the great praise he was to receive; and he was ashamed to return, when he found how ill his book had succeeded. It was unlucky in coming out on the same day with Robertson's 'History of Scotland.' His husbandry, however, is good." BOSWELL. "So he was fitter for that than for heroick history: he did well, when he turned his sword into a plough-share."

[4] "London Chronicle," May 2, 1769. This respectable man is there mentioned to have died on the 3d of April, that year, at Cofflect, the seat of Thomas Veale, Esq. in his way to London.

Mr. Eliot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *Mahogany*; and it is made of two parts gin, and one part treacle, well beaten together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr. Eliot. I thought it very good liquor; and said it was a counterpart of what is called *Athol Porridge* in the Highlands of Scotland, which is a mixture of whisky and honey. Johnson said, "that must be a better liquor than the Cornish for both its component parts are better." He also observed, "*Mahogany* must be a modern name; for it is not long since the wood called mahogany was known in this country." I mentioned his scale of liquors:—claret for boys,—port for men,—brandy for heroes. "Then (said Mr. Burke) let me have claret: I love to be a boy; to have the careless gaiety of boyish days." JOHNSON. "I should drink claret too, if it would give me that; but it does not: it neither makes boys men, nor men boys. You'll be drowned by it, before it has any effect upon you." 1781. Ætat. 72.

I ventured to mention a ludicrous paragraph in the newspapers, that Dr. Johnson was learning to dance of Vestris. Lord Charlemont, wishing to excite him to talk, proposed in a whisper, that he should be asked, whether it was true. "Shall I ask him?" said his Lordship. We were, by a great majority, clear for the experiment. Upon which his Lordship very gravely, and with a courteous air said, "Pray, Sir, is it true that you are taking lessons of Vestris?" This was risking a good deal, and required the boldness of a General of Irish Volunteers to make the attempt. Johnson was at first startled, and in some heat answered, "How can your Lord-

1781. Ætat. 72. ship ask so simple a question?" But immediately recovering himself, whether from unwillingness to be deceived, or to appear deceived, or whether from real good humour, he kept up the joke: "Nay, but if any body were to answer the paragraph, and contradict it, I'd have a reply, and would say, that he who contradicted it was no friend either to Vestris or me. For why should not Dr. Johnson add to his other powers a little corporeal agility? Socrates learnt to dance at an advanced age, and Cato learnt Greek at an advanced age. Then it might proceed to say, that this Johnson, not content with dancing on the ground, might dance on the rope; and they might introduce the elephant dancing on the rope. A nobleman[5] wrote a play, called 'Love in a hollow Tree.' He found out that it was a bad one, and therefore wished to buy up all the copies, and burn them. The Duchess of Marlborough had kept one; and when he was against her at an election, she had a new edition of it printed, and prefixed to it, as a frontispiece, an elephant dancing on a rope; to shew, that his Lordship's writing comedy was as aukward as an elephant dancing on a rope."

On Sunday, April 1, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, with Sir Philip Jennings Clerk and Mr. Perkins,[6] who had the superintendance of Mr. Thrale's brewery, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year. Sir Philip had the appearance of a gentleman of ancient family, well advanced in life. He wore his own white hair in a bag of goodly size, a black velvet coat, with an embroidered waistcoat, and very rich laced ruffles; which Mrs. Thrale said

[5] William, the first Viscount Grimston.

[6] See Vol. II. p. 297.

were old fashioned, but which, for that reason, I thought the more respectable, more like a Tory; yet Sir Philip was then in Opposition in Parliament. "Ah, Sir, (said Johnson,) ancient ruffles and modern principles do not agree." Sir Philip defended the Opposition to the American war ably and with temper, and I joined him. He said, the majority of the nation was against the ministry. Johnson. "*I*, Sir, am against the ministry; but it is for having too little of that, of which Opposition thinks they have too much. Were I minister, if any man wagged his finger against me, he should be turned out; for that which it is in the power of government to give at pleasure to one or to another, should be given to the supporters of Government. If you will not oppose at the expence of losing your place, your opposition will not be honest, you will feel no serious grievance; and the present opposition is only a contest to get what others have. Sir Robert Walpole acted as I would do. As to the American war, the *sense* of the nation is *with* the ministry. The majority of those who can *understand* is with it; the majority of those who can only *hear*, is against it; and as those who can only hear are more numerous than those who can understand, and Opposition is always loudest, a majority of the rabble will be for Opposition." 1781. Ætat. 72.

This boisterous vivacity entertained us: but the truth in my opinion was, that those who could understand the best were against the American war, as almost every man now is, when the question has been coolly considered.

Mrs. Thrale gave high praise to Mr. Dudley Long, (now North). Johnson. "Nay, my dear lady, don't talk so. Mr. Long's character is very

1781. Ætat. 72. *short.* It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of genteel appearance, and that is all.[7] I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do: for whenever there is exaggerated praise, every body is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now there is Pepys;[8] you praised that man with such disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. His blood is upon your head. By the same principle, your malice defeats itself; for your censure is too violent. And yet (looking to her with a leering smile) she is the first woman in the world, could she but restrain that wicked tongue of hers;—she would be the only woman, could she but command that little whirligig."

Upon the subject of exaggerated praise I took the liberty to say, that I thought there might be very high praise given to a known character which deserved it, and therfore it would not be exaggerated. Thus, one might say of Mr. Edmund Burke, he is a very wonderful man. Johnson. "No, Sir, you

[7] Here Johnson condescended to play upon the words *Long* and *short*. But little did he know that, owing to Mr. Long's reserve in his presence, he was talking thus of a gentleman distinguished amongst his acquaintance, for acuteness of wit; one to whom I think the French expression, '*Il petille d'esprit*,' is particularly suited. He has gratified me by mentioning that he heard Dr. Johnson say, "Sir, if I were to lose Boswell, it would be a limb amputated."

[8] William Weller Pepys, Esq. one of the Masters in the High Court of Chancery, and well known in polite circles. My acquaintance with him is not sufficient to enable me to speak of him from my own judgement. But I know that both at Eton and Oxford he was the intimate friend of the late Sir James Macdonald, the *Marcellus* of Scotland, whose extraordinary talents, learning, and virtues, will ever be remembered with admiration and regret.

would not be safe, if another man had a mind perversely to contradict. He might answer, 'Where is all the wonder? Burke is, to be sure, a man of uncommon abilities, with a great quantity of matter in his mind, and a great fluency of language in his mouth. But we are not to be stunned and astonished by him.' So you see, Sir, even Burke would suffer, not from any fault of his own, but from your folly."

1781. Ætat. 72.

Mrs. Thrale mentioned a gentleman who had acquired a fortune of four thousand a year in trade, but was absolutely miserable, because he could not talk in company; so miserable, that he was impelled to lament his situation in the street to******, whom he hates, and who he knows despises him. "I am a most unhappy man (said he). I am invited to conversations. I go to conversations; but, alas! I have no conversation."—JOHNSON. "Man commonly cannot be successful in different ways. This gentleman has spent, in getting four thousand pounds a year, the time in which he might have learnt to talk; and now he cannot talk." Mr. Perkins made a shrewd and droll remark: "If he had got his four thousand a year as a mountebank, he might have learnt to talk at the same time that he was getting his fortune."

Some other gentlemen came in. The conversation concerning the person whose character Dr. Johnson had treated so slightingly, as he did not know his merit, was resumed. Mrs. Thrale said, "You think so of him, Sir, because he is quiet, and does not exert himself with force. You'll be saying the same thing of Mr. ***** there, who sits as quiet—." This was not well bred; and Johnson

1781. Ætat. 72. did not let it pass without correction. "Nay, Madam, what right have you to talk thus? Both Mr. ***** and I have reason to take it ill. *You* may talk so of Mr. *****; but why do you make *me* do it. Have I said any thing against Mr. *****? You have *set* him, that I might shoot him: but I have not shot him."

One of the gentlemen said, he had seen three folio volumes of Dr. Johnson's sayings collected by me. "I must put you right, Sir, (said I;) for I am very exact in authenticity. You could not see folio volumes, for I have none: you might have seen some in quarto and octavo. This is an inattention which one should guard against." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a want of concern about veracity. He does not know that he saw *any* volumes. If he had seen them he could have remembered their size."

Mr. Thrale appeared very lethargick to-day. I saw him again on Monday evening, at which time he was not thought to be in immediate danger; but early in the morning of Wednesday the 4th, he expired. Johnson was in the house, and thus mentions the event: "I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect and benignity."[9] Upon that day there was a *Call* of the LITERARY CLUB; but Johnson apologised for his absence by the following note:

[9] Prayers and Meditations, p. 191.

[Johnson's expressions on this occasion remind us of Isaac Walton's eulogy on Whitgift, in his Life of Hooker.—"He lived - - - to be present at the expiration of her [Q. Elizabeth's] last breath, and to behold the closing of those eyes that had long looked upon him with reverence and affection." K.]

"MR. JOHNSON knows that Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other gentlemen will excuse his incompliance with the Call, when they are told that Mr. Thrale died this morning." 1781. Ætat. 72.

"Wednesday."

Mr. Thrale's death was a very essential loss to Johnson, who, although he did not foresee all that afterwards happened, was sufficiently convinced that the comforts which Mr. Thrale's family afforded him, would now in a great measure cease. He, however, continued to shew a kind attention to his widow and children as long as it was acceptable: and he took upon him, with a very earnest concern, the office of one of his executors, the importance of which seemed greater than usual to him, from his circumstances having been always such, that he had scarcely any share in the real business of life. His friends of the CLUB were in hopes that Mr. Thrale might have made a liberal provision for him for his life, which, as Mr. Thrale left no son, and a very large fortune, it would have been highly to his honour to have done; and, considering Dr. Johnson's age, could not have been of long duration; but he bequeathed him only two hundred pounds, which was the legacy given to each of his executors. I could not but be somewhat diverted by hearing Johnson talk in a pompous manner of his new office, and particularly of the concerns of the brewery, which it was at last resolved should be sold. Lord Lucan tells a very good story, which, if not precisely exact, is certainly characteristical: that when the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward, Johnson appeared bustling about, with an ink-horn and pen in his button-

1781. hole, like an excise-man; and on being asked what
Ætat. 72. he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

On Friday, April 6, he carried me to dine at a club, which, at his desire, had been lately formed at the Queen's Arms, in St. Paul's Church-yard. He told Mr. Hoole, that he wished to have a *City Club*, and asked him to collect one; but, said he, "Don't let them be *patriots*." The company were to-day very sensible, well-behaved man. I have preserved only two particulars of his conversation. He said he was glad Lord George Gordon had escaped, rather than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for *constructive treason*; which, in consistency with his true, manly, constitutional Toryism, he considered would be a dangerous engine of arbitrary power. And upon its being mentioned that an opulent and very indolent Scotch nobleman, who totally resigned the management of his affairs to a man of knowledge and abilities, had claimed some merit by saying, "The next best thing to managing a man's own affairs well, is being sensible of incapacity, and not attempting it, but having full confidence in one who can do it:" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, this is paltry. There is a middle course. Let a man give application; and depend upon it he will soon get above a despicable state of helplessness, and attain the power of acting for himself."

On Saturday, April 7, I dined with him at Mr. Hoole's with Governour Bouchier and Captain Orme, both of whom had been long in the East-Indies; and

being men of good sense and observation, were very entertaining. Johnson defended the oriental regulation of different *casts* of men,[1] which was objected to as totally destructive of the hopes of rising in society by personal merit. He shewed that there was a *principle* in it sufficiently plausible by analogy. "We see (said he) in metals that there are different species; and so likewise in animals, though one species may not differ very widely from another, as in the species of dogs,—the cur, the spaniel, the mastiff. The Bramins are the mastiffs of mankind." 1781. Ætat. 72.

On Thursday, April 12, I dined with him at a Bishop's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Berenger, and some more company. He had dined the day before at another Bishop's. I have unfortunately recorded none of his conversation at the Bishop's where we dined together: but I have preserved his ingenious defence of his dining twice abroad in Passion-week; a laxity, in which I am convinced he would not have indulged himself at the time when he wrote his solemn paper in "The Rambler," upon that aweful season. It appeared to me, that by being much more in company, and enjoying more luxurious living, he had contracted a keener relish for pleasure, and was consequently less rigorous in his religious rites. This he would not acknowledge; but he reasoned with admirable sophistry, as follows: "Why, Sir, a Bishop's calling company together in this week, is, to use the vulgar phrase, not *the thing*. But you must consider laxity is a bad thing; but preciseness is also a bad thing; and your general character may be more hurt by

[1] [Rajapouts, the military cast; the Bramins, pacifick and abstemious. K.]

1781. Ætat. 72. preciseness than by dining with a Bishop in Passion-week. There might be a handle for reflection. It might be said, 'He refuses to dine with a Bishop in Passion-week, but was three Sundays absent from church.'" BOSWELL. "Very true, Sir. But suppose a man to be uniformly of good conduct, would it not be better that he should refuse to dine with a Bishop in this week, and so not encourage a bad practice by his example?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider whether you might not do more harm by lessening the influence of a Bishop's character by your disapprobation in refusing him, than by going to him."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"DEAR MADAM,

"LIFE is full of troubles. I have just lost my dear friend Thrale. I hope he is happy; but I have had a great loss. I am otherwise pretty well. I require some care of myself, but that care is not ineffectual; and when I am out of order, I think it often my own fault.

"The spring is now making quick advances. As it is the season in which the whole world is enlivened and invigorated, I hope that both you and I shall partake of its benefits. My desire is to see Lichfield; but being left executor to my friend, I know not whether I can be spared; but I will try, for it is now long since we saw one another, and how little we can promise ourselves many more interviews, we are taught by hourly examples of mortality. Let us try to live so as that mortality may not be an evil.

Write to me soon, my dearest; your letters will give me great pleasure. 1781. Ætat. 72.

I am sorry that Mr. Porter has not had his box; but by sending it to Mr. Mathias, who very readily undertook its conveyance, I did the best I could, and perhaps before now he has it.

"Be so kind as to make my compliments to my friends; I have a great value for their kindness, and hope to enjoy it before summer is past. Do write to me. I am, dearest love,

"Your most humble servant,

"London, April 12, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Friday, April 13, being Good-Friday, I went to St. Clement's church with him as usual. There I saw again his old fellow collegian, Edwards, to whom I said, "I think, Sir, Dr. Johnson and you meet only at Church."—"Sir, (said he,) it is the best place we can meet in, except Heaven, and I hope we shall meet there too." Dr. Johnson told me, that there was very little communication between Edwards and him, after their unexpected renewal of acquaintance. "But (said he, smiling) he met me once, and said, 'I am told you have written a very pretty book called *The Rambler*.' I was unwilling that he should leave the world in total darkness, and sent him a set."

Mr. Berenger[2] visited him to day, and was very pleasing. We talked of an evening society for conversation at a house in town, of which we were all

[2] [Richard Berenger, Esq. many years Gentleman of the Horse to his present Majesty, and authour of "The History and Art of Horsemanship," in two volumes, 4to, 1771. M.]

1781. Ætat. 72. members, but of which Johnson sai , "It will never do, Sir. There is nothing served about there, neither tea, nor coffee, nor lemonade, nor any thing whatever; and depend upon it, Sir, a man does not love to go to a place from whence he comes out exactly as he went in." I endeavoured for argument's sake, to maintain that men of learning and talents might have very good intellectual society, without the aid of any little gratifications of the senses. Berenger joined with Johnson, and said, that without these any meeting would be dull and insipid. He would therefore have all the slight refreshments; nay, it would not be amiss to have some cold meat, and a bottle of wine upon a side-board. "Sir, (said Johnson to me, with an air of triumph,) Mr. Berenger knows the world. Every body loves to have good things furnished to them without any trouble. I told Mrs. Thrale once, that as she did not choose to have card-tables, she should have a profusion of the best sweetmeats, and she would be sure to have company enough come to her." I agreed with my illustrious friend upon this subject; for it has pleased God to make man a composite animal, and where there is nothing to refresh the body, the mind will languish.

On Sunday, April 15, being Easter-day, after solemn worship in St. Paul's church, I found him alone; Dr. Scott, of the Commons, came in. He talked of its having been said, that Addison wrote some of his best papers in "The Spectator," when warm with wine. Dr. Johnson did not seem willing to admit this. Dr. Scott, as a confirmation of it, related, that Blackstone, a sober man, composed his "Commentaries" with a bottle of port before him;

and found his mind invigorated and supported in the fatigue of his great Work, by a temperate use of it. 1781. Ætat. 72.

I told him, that in a company where I had lately been, a desire was expressed to know his authority for the shocking story of Addison's sending an execution into Steele's house.[2] "Sir, (said he,) it is generally known; it is known to all who are acquainted with the literary history of that period: it is as well known, as that he wrote "Cato." Mr. Thomas Sheridan once defended Addison to me, by alleging that he did it in order to cover Steele's goods from other creditors, who were going to seize them.

We talked of the difference between the mode of education at Oxford, and that in those Colleges where instruction is chiefly conveyed by lectures. JOHNSON. "Lectures were once useful; but now, when all can read, and books are so numerous, lectures are unnecessary. If your attention fails, and you miss a part of the lecture, it is lost; you cannot go back as you do upon a book." Dr. Scott agreed with him. "But yet (said I) Dr. Scott, you yourself gave lectures at Oxford." He smiled. "You laughed (then said I) at those who came to you."

Dr. Scott left us, and soon afterwards we went to dinner. Our company consisted of Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Desmoulins, Mr. Levett, Mr. Allen, the printer, [Mr. Macbean,] and Mrs. Hall, sister of the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, and resembling him, as I thought, both in figure and manner. Johnson produced now, for the first time, some handsome silver salvers, which he told me he had

[2] See this explained, p. 53, 54, of this volume.

1781. Ætat. 72. bought fourteen years ago; so it was a great day. I was not a little amused by observing Allen perpetually struggling to talk in the manner of Johnson, like the little frog in the fable blowing himself up to resemble the stately ox.

I mentioned a kind of religious Robinhood Society, which met every Sunday evening at Coachmakers'-hall, for free debate; and that the subject for this night was, the text which relates, with other miracles which happened at our SAVIOUR's death, "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Mrs. Hall said it was a very curious subject, and she should like to hear it discussed. JOHNSON. (somewhat warmly) "One would not go to such a place to hear it,—one would not be seen in such a place—to give countenance to such a meeting." I, however, resolved that I would go. "But, Sir, (said she to Johnson,) I should like to hear *you* discuss it." He seemed reluctant to engage in it. She talked of the resurrection of the human race in general, and maintained that we shall be raised with the same bodies. JOHNSON. "Nay, Madam, we see that it is not to be the same body; for the Scripture uses the illustration of grain sown, and we know that the grain which grows is not the same with what is sown. You cannot suppose that we shall rise with a diseased body; it is enough if there be such a sameness as to distinguish identity of person." She seemed desirous of knowing more, but he left the question in obscurity.

Of apparitions,[3] he observed, "A total disbelief

[3] [As this subject frequently recurs in these volumes, the reader

of them is adverse to the opinion of the existence of the soul between death and the last day; the question simply is, whether departed spirits ever have the power of making themselves perceptible to us: a man who thinks he has seen an apparition, can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another; and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means." 1781. Ætat. 72.

He mentioned a thing as not unfrequent, of which I had never heard before,—being *called*, that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice of a known person at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being reached by any sound uttered by human organs. "An acquaintance, on whose veracity I can depend, told me, that walking home one evening to Kilmarnock, he heard himself called from a wood, by the voice of a brother who had gone to America; and the next packet brought accounts of that brother's death." Macbean asserted that this inexplicable *calling* was a thing very well known. Dr. Johnson said, that one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother

may be led erroneously to suppose that Dr. Johnson was so fond of such discussions, as frequently to introduce them. But the truth is, that the authour himself delighted in talking concerning ghosts, and what he has frequently denominated *the mysterious;* and therefore took every opportunity of *leading* Johnson to converse on such subjects. M.]

[The authour of this work was most undoubtedly fond of *the mysterious*, and perhaps upon some occasions may have directed the conversation to those topicks, when they would not spontaneously have suggested themselves to Johnson's mind; but that *he* also had a love for speculations of that nature, may be gathered from his writings throughout. J. B.—O.]

1781. Ætat. 72. distinctly call—*Sam*. She was then at Lichfield; but nothing ensued. This phenomenon is, I think, as wonderful as any other mysterious fact, which many people are very slow to believe, or rather, indeed, reject with an obstinate contempt.

Some time after this, upon his making a remark which escaped my attention, Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hall were both together striving to answer him. He grew angry, and called out loudly, "Nay, when you both speak at once, it is intolerable." But checking himself, and softening, he said, "This one may say, though you *are* ladies." Then he brightened into gay humour, and addressed them in the words of one of the songs in "The Beggar's Opera."

"But two at a time there's no mortal can bear."

"What, Sir, (said I,) are you going to turn Captain Macheath?" There was something as pleasantly ludicrous in this scene as can be imagined. The contrast between Macheath, Polly, and Lucy—and Dr. Samuel Johnson, blind, peevish Mrs. Williams, and lean, lank, preaching Mrs. Hall, was exquisite.

I stole away to Coachmakers'-hall, and heard the difficult text of which we had talked, discussed with great decency, and some intelligence, by several speakers. There was a difference of opinion as to the appearance of ghosts in modern times, though the arguments for it, supported by Mr. Addison's authority, preponderated. The immediate subject of debate was embarrassed by the *bodies* of the saints having been said to rise, and by the question what became of them afterwards:—did they return again to their graves? or were they translated to heaven?

Only one evangelist mentions the fact,[4] and the commentators whom I have looked at do not make the passage clear. There is, however, no occasion for our understanding it farther, than to know that it was one of the extraordinary manifestations of divine power, which accompanied the most important event that ever happened. 1781. Ætat. 72.

On Friday, April 20, I spent with him one of the happiest days that I remember to have enjoyed in the whole course of my life. Mrs. Garrick, whose grief for the loss of her husband was, I believe, as sincere as wounded affection and admiration could produce, had this day, for the first time since his death, a select party of his friends to dine with her. The company was, Miss Hannah More, who lived with her, and whom she called her Chaplain; Mrs. Boscawen,[5] Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Dr. Johnson, and myself. We found ourselves very elegantly entertained at her house in the Adelphi, where I have passed many a pleasing hour with him "who gladdened life." She looked well, talked of her husband with complacency, and while she cast her eyes on his portrait, which hung over the chimney-piece, said, that "death was now the most agreeable object to her." The very semblance of David Garrick was cheering. Mr. Beauclerk, with happy propriety, inscribed under that fine portrait of him, which by Lady Diana's kindness is now the property of my friend Mr. Langton, the following passage from his beloved Shakspeare:

[4] St. Matthew, chap. xxvii. v. 52, 53.

[5] See Vol. III. latter end of April, 1778.

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"———— ———— A merrier man,
"Within the limit of becoming mirth,
"I never spent an hour's talk withal.
"His eye begets occasion for his wit;
"For every object that the one doth catch,
"The other turns to a mirth-moving jest;
"Which his fair tongue (Conceit's expositor)
"Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
"That aged ears play truant at his tales,
"And younger hearings are quite ravished;
"So sweet and voluble is his discourse."

We were all in fine spirits; and I whispered to Mrs. Boscawen, "I believe this is as much as can be made of life." In addition to a splendid entertainment, we were regaled with Lichfield ale, which had a peculiar appropriate value. Sir Joshua, and Dr. Burney, and I, drank cordially of it to Dr. Johnson's health; and though he would not join us, he as cordially answered, "Gentlemen, I wish you all as well as you do me."

The general effect of this day dwells upon my mind in fond remembrance; but I do not find much conversation recorded. What I have preserved shall be faithfully given.

One of the company mentioned Mr. Thomas Hollis, the strenuous Whig, who used to send over Europe presents of democratical books, with their boards stamped with daggers and caps of liberty. Mrs. Carter said, "He was a bad man: he used to talk uncharitably." JOHNSON. "Poh! poh! Madam; who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably? Besides, he was a dull poor creature as ever

lived: and I believe he would not have done harm to a man whom he knew to be of very opposite principles to his own. I remember once at the Society of Arts, when an advertisement was to be drawn up, he pointed me out as the man who could do it best. This, you will observe, was kindness to me. I however slipt away and escaped it."

Mrs. Carter having said of the same person, "I doubt he was an Atheist." JOHNSON. "I don't know that. He might perhaps have become one, if he had had time to ripen, (smiling.) He might have *exuberated* into an Atheist."

Sir Joshua Reynolds praised "Mudge's[6] Sermons." JOHNSON. "Mudge's Sermons are good, but not practical. He grasps more sense than he can hold; he takes more corn than he can make into meal; he opens a wide prospect, but it is so distant, it is indistinct. I love 'Blair's Sermons.' Though the dog is a Scotchman, and a Presbyterian, and every thing he should not be, I was the first to praise them. Such was my candour." (smiling.) MRS. BOSCAWEN. "Such his great merit, to get the better of all your prejudices." JOHNSON. "Why, Madam, let us compound the matter; let us ascribe it to my candour, and his merit."

In the evening we had a large company in the drawing-room; several ladies, the Bishop of Killaloe, Dr. Percy, Mr. Chamberlayne of the Treasury, &c. &c. Somebody said, the life of a mere literary man could not be very entertaining. JOHNSON. "But it certainly may. This is a remark which has been made, and repeated, without justice; why should the life of a literary man be less entertaining than the

[6] See page 82 of this Volume.

1781. Ætat. 72. life of any other man? Are there not as interesting varieties in such a life? As *a literary life* it may be very entertaining." BOSWELL. "But it must be better surely, when it is diversified with a little active variety—such as his having gone to Jamaica;—or—his having gone to the Hebrides." Johnson was not displeased at this.

Talking of a very respectable authour, he told us a curious circumstance in his life, which was, that he had married a printer's devil. REYNOLDS. "A Printer's devil, Sir! Why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. But I suppose he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her. (Then looking very serious, and very earnest.) And she did not disgrace him;—the woman had a bottom of good sense." The word *bottom* thus introduced, was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back who sat on the same settee with her. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it; he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotick power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, "Where's the merriment?" Then collecting himself, and looking aweful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, "I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible;" as if he had said, hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral.

He and I walked away together; we stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost, who once lived in the buildings behind us, Beauclerk and Garrick. "Ay, Sir, (said he, tenderly) and two such friends as cannot be supplied." 1781. Ætat. 72.

For some time after this day I did not see him very often, and of the conversation which I did enjoy, I am sorry to find I have preserved but little. I was at this time engaged in a variety of other matters, which required exertion and assiduity, and necessarily occupied almost all my time.

One day having spoken very freely of those who were then in power, he said to me, "Between ourselves, Sir, I do not like to give opposition the satisfaction of knowing how much I disapprove of the ministry." And when I mentioned that Mr. Burke had boasted how quiet the nation was in George the Second's reign, when Whigs were in power, compared with the present reign, when Tories governed; —"Why, Sir, (said he) you are to consider that Tories having more reverence for government, will not oppose with the same violence as Whigs, who being unrestrained by that principle, will oppose by any means."

This month he lost not only Mr. Thrale, but another friend, Mr. William Strahan, Junior, printer, the eldest son of his old and constant friend, Printer to his Majesty.

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"TO MRS. STRAHAN.

"DEAR MADAM,

"THE grief which I feel for the loss of a very kind friend, is sufficient to make me know how much you suffer by the death of an amiable son: a man, of whom I think it may be truly said, that no one knew him who does not lament him. I look upon myself as having a friend, another friend, taken from me.

"Comfort, dear Madam, I would give you, if I could; but I know how little the forms of consolation can avail. Let me, however, counsel you not to waste your health in unprofitable sorrow, but go to Bath, and endeavour to prolong your own life; but when we have all done all that we can, one friend must in time lose the other.

"I am, dear Madam,
"Your most humble servant,
"April 23, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Tuesday, May 8, I had the pleasure of again dining with him and Mr. Wilkes, at Mr. Dilly's. No *negociation* was now required to bring them together; for Johnson was so well satisfied with the former interview, that he was very glad to meet Wilkes again, who was this day seated between Dr. Beattie and Dr. Johnson; (between *Truth* and *Reason*, as General Paoli said, when I told him of it.) WILKES. "I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, that there should be a bill brought into parliament that the controverted elections for Scotland should be tried in that country, at their own Abbey of Holy-

Rood House, and not here; for the consequence of trying them here is, that we have an inundation of Scotchmen, who come up and never go back again. Now here is Boswell, who is come upon the election for his own county, which will not last a fortnight." Johnson. "Nay, Sir, I see no reason why they should be tried at all; for, you know, one Scotchman is as good as another." Wilkes. "Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an Advocate at the Scotch bar?" Boswell. "I believe, two thousand pounds." Wilkes. "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?" Johnson. "Why, Sir, the money may be spent in England; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?" Wilkes. "You know, in the last war, the immense booty which Thurot carried off by the complete plunder of seven Scotch isles; he re-embarked with *three and six-pence*." Here again Johnson and Wilkes joined in extravagant sportive raillery upon the supposed poverty of Scotland, which Dr. Beattie and I did not think it worth our while to dispute. 1781. Ætat. 72.

The subject of quotation being introduced, Mr. Wilkes censured it as pedantry. Johnson. "No, Sir, it is a good thing; there is a community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world." Wilkes. "Upon the continent they all quote the vulgate Bible. Shakspeare is chiefly quoted here; and we quote also Pope, Prior, Butler, Waller, and sometimes Cowley."

We talked of Letter-writing. Johnson. "It is now become so much the fashion to publish letters, that in order to avoid it, I put as little into mine as

1781. Ætat. 72. I can." BOSWELL. " Do what you will, Sir, you cannot avoid it. Should you even write as ill as you can, your letters would be published as curiosities:

' Behold a miracle! instead of wit,
' See two dull lines with Stanhope's pencil writ."

He gave us an entertaining account of *Bet Flint*, a woman of the town, who, with some eccentrick talents and much effrontery, forced herself upon his acquaintance. " Bet (said he) wrote her own Life in verse[7], which she brought to me, wishing that I would furnish her with a Preface to it. (Laughing.) I used to say of her, that she was generally slut and drunkard;—occasionaly, whore and thief. She had, however, genteel lodgings, a spinnet on which she played, and a boy that walked before her chair. Poor Bet was taken up on a charge of stealing a counterpane, and tried at the Old Bailey. Chief Justice ———, who loved a wench, summed up favourably, and she was acquitted.[8] After which, Bet said, with

[7] Johnson, whose memory was wonderfully retentive, remembered the first four lines of this curious production, which have been communicated to me by a young lady of his acquaintance:

" When first I drew my vital breath,
" A little minikin I came upon earth;
" And then I came from a dark abode,
" nto this gay and gaudy world.

[8] [The account which Johnson had received on this occasion, was not quite accurate. BET was tried at the Old Bailey in September 1758, not by the Chief Justice here alluded to, (who however tried another cause on the same day,) but before Sir William Moreton, Recorder; and she was acquitted, not in consequence of any *favourable summing up* of the Judge, but because the Prosecutrix, Mary Walthow, could not prove that the goods charged to have been stolen, [a counterpane, a silver spoon, two napkins, &c.] were her property.

a gay and satisfied air, 'Now that the counterpane is my own, I shall make a petticoat of it." 1781. Ætat. 72.

Talking of oratory, Mr. Wilkes described it as accompanied with all the charms of poetical expression. Johnson. "No, Sir; oratory is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place."—Wilkes. "But this does not move the passions." Johnson. "He must be a weak man, who is to be so moved." Wilkes. (naming a celebrated orator) "Amidst all the brillancy of ——'s imagination, and the exuberance of his wit, there is a strange want of *taste*. It was observed of Apelles's Venus[9], that her flesh seemed as if she had been nourished by roses: his oratory would sometimes make one suspect that he eats potatoes and drinks whisky."

Mr. Wilkes observed, how tenacious we are of forms in this country; and gave as an instance, the vote of the House of Commons for remitting money to pay the army in America *in Portugal pieces*, when, in reality, the remittance is made not in Portugal money, but in our specie. Johnson. "Is there not a law, Sir, against exporting the current coin of the realm." Wilkes. "Yes, Sir; but might not the House of Commons, in case of real evident necessity, order our own current coin to be sent into

Bet does not appear to have lived at that time in a very *genteel* style; for she paid for her ready-furnished *room* in Meard's Court, Dean Street, Soho, from which these articles were alleged to be stolen, only *five shillings* a week.

Mr. James Boswell took the trouble to examine the Sessions Paper, to ascertain these particulars. M.]

[9] [Mr. Wilkes mistook the objection of Euphranor to the Theseus of Parrhasius for a description of the Venus of Apelles. Vide Plutarch. "*Bellone an pace clariores Athenienses.*" K.]

1781. Ætat. 72. "our own colonies?"—Here Johnson, with that quickness of recollection which distinguished him so eminently, gave the *Middlesex Patriot* an admirable retort upon his own ground. "Sure, Sir, *you* don't think a *resolution of the House of Commons* equal to *the law of the land.* WILKES. (at once perceiving the application) "GOD forbid, Sir."—To hear what had been treated with such violence in "The False Alarm," now turned into pleasant repartee, was extremely agreeable. Johnson went on:—"Locke observes well, that a prohibition to export the current coin is impolitick; for when the balance of trade happens to be against a state, the current coin *must* be exported."

Mr. Beauclerk's great library was this season sold in London by auction. Mr. Wilkes said, he wondered to find in it such a numerous collection of sermons: seeming to think it strange that a gentleman of Mr. Beauclerk's character in the gay world, should have chosen to have many compositions of that kind. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider, that sermons make a considerable branch of English literature; so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons:[1] and

[1] Mr. Wilkes probably did not know that there is in an English sermon the most comprehensive and lively account of that entertaining faculty, for which he himself was so much admired. It is in Dr. Barrow's first volume, and fourteenth sermon. "*Against foolish Talking and Jesting.*" My old acquaintance, the late Corbyn Morris, in his ingenious "Essay on Wit, Humour, and Ridicule," calls it "a *profuse* description of Wit:" but I do not see how it could be curtailed, without leaving out some good circumstance of discrimination. As it is not generally known, and may perhaps dispose some to read sermons, from which they may receive real advantage, while looking only for entertainment, I shall here subjoin it.

in all collections, Sir, the desire of augmenting them grows stronger in proportion to the advance in acqui- 1781. Ætat. 72.

"But first (says the learned preacher) it may be demanded, what the thing we speak of is! Or what this facetiousness (or *wit*, as he calls it before) doth import? To which questions I might reply, as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, 'Tis that which we all see and know.' Any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is, indeed, a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgements, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humourous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyberbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture, passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange: sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose. Often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable, and inexplicable; being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy, and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by,) which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar; it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can

1781. Ætat. 72. sition; as motion is accelerated by the continuance of the *impetus*. Besides, Sir, (looking at Mr. Wilkes with a placid but significant smile) a man may collect sermons with intention of making himself better by them. I hope Mr. Beauclerk intended, that some time or other that should be the case with him."

Mr. Wilkes said to me, loud enough for Dr. Johnson to hear, "Dr. Johnson should make me a present of his 'Lives of the Poets,' as I am a poor patriot, who cannot afford to buy them." Johnson seemed to take no notice of this hint; but in a little while, he called to Mr. Dilly, "Pray, Sir, be so good as to send a set of my Lives to Mr. Wilkes, with my compliments." This was accordingly done; and Mr. Wilkes paid Dr. Johnson a visit, was courteously received, and sat with him a long time.

The company gradually dropped away. Mr. Dilly himself was called down stairs upon business; I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq. literally *tête-à-tête*; for they were re-

fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dextrously accommodate them to the purpose before him; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle such persons are termed ἐπιδέξιοι, dextrous men, and εὔτροποι, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness, as semblance of difficulty: (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure:) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distateful or insipid, with an unusual and thence grateful tang."

clined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that which I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the kid.[2] 1781. Ætat. 72.

After this day there was another pretty long interval, during which Dr. Johnson and I did not meet. When I mentioned it to him with regret, he was pleased to say, "Then, Sir, let us live double."

About this time it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men, animated by a desire to please. These societies were denominated *Blue-stocking Clubs*, the origin of which title being little known, it may be worth while to relate it. One of the most eminent members of those societies, when they first commenced, was Mr. Stillingfleet,[3] whose dress was remarkably grave, and in particular it was observed, that he wore blue stockings. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss, that it used to be said, "We can do

[2] When I mentioned this to the Bishop of Killaloe, "With the *goat*," said his Lordship. Such, however, was the engaging politeness and pleasantry of Mr. Wilkes, and such the social good humour of the Bishop, that when they dined together at Mr. Dilly's, where I also was, they were mutually agreeable.

[3] Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, authour of tracts relating to natural history, &c.

1781. Ætat. 72. nothing without the *blue-stockings*;" and thus by degrees the title was established. Miss Hannah More has admirably described a *Blue-stocking Club*, in her "*Bas Bleu*," a poem in which many of the persons who were most conspicuous there are mentioned.

Johnson was prevailed with to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton (now Countess of Corke) who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother, Lady Galway. Her vivacity enchanted the Sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable ease. A singular instance happened one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetick. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure (said she) they have affected *me*."—"Why (said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about,) that is, because, dearest, you're a dunce." When she sometime afterwards mentioned this to him, he said with equal truth and politeness; "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

Another evening Johnson's kind indulgence towards me had a pretty difficult trial. I had dined at the Duke of Montrose's with a very agreeable party, and his Grace, according to his usual custom, had circulated the bottle very freely. Lord Graham and I went together to Miss Monckton's, where I certainly was in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe. In the midst of a great number of persons of the first rank, amongst whom I recollect with confusion, a noble lady of the most stately decorum, I placed myself next to Johnson, and thinking myself now fully his match, talked to him in a loud and boisterous manner, desirous to let the company know

how I could contend with *Ajax*. I particularly remember pressing him upon the value of the pleasures of the imagination, and as an illustration of my argument, asking him, "What, Sir, supposing I were to fancy that the —— (naming the most charming Duchess in his Majesty's dominions) were in love with me, should I not be very happy?" My friend with much address evaded my interrogatories, and kept me as quiet as possible; but it may easily be conceived how he must have felt.[4] However, when a few days 1781. Ætat. 72.

[4] Next day I endeavoured to give what had happened the most ingenious turn I could, by the following verses:

TO THE HONOURABLE MISS MONCKTON.

Not that with th' excellent Montrose
  I had the happiness to dine;
Not that I late from table rose,
  From Graham's wit, from generous wine.

It was not these alone which led
  On sacred manners to encroach;
And made me feel what most I dread,
  JOHNSON'S just frown, and self-reproach.

But when I enter'd, not abash'd,
  From your bright eyes were shot such rays,
At once intoxication flash'd,
  And all my frame was in a blaze!

But not a brilliant blaze I own,
  Of the dull smoke I'm yet asham'd;
I was a dreary ruin grown,
  And not enlighten'd though inflam'd.

Victim at once to wine and love,
  I hope, MARIA, you'll forgive;
While I invoke the powers above,
  That henceforth I may wiser live.

The lady was generously forgiving, returned me an obliging

1781. Ætat. 72. afterwards I waited upon him and made an apology, he behaved with the most friendly gentleness.

While I remained in London this year, Johnson and I dined together at several places. I recollect a placid day at Dr. Butter's, who had now removed from Derby to Lower-Grosvenor-street, London; but of his conversation on that and other occasions during this period, I neglected to keep any regular record, and shall therefore insert here some miscellaneous articles which I find in my Johnsonian notes.

His disorderly habits, when "making provision for the day that was passing over him," appear from the following anecdote, communicated to me by Mr. John Nichols:—"In the year 1763, a young bookseller, who was an apprentice to Mr. Whiston, waited on him with a subscription to his 'Shakspeare:' and observing that the Doctor made no entry in any book of the subscriber's name, ventured diffidently to ask, whether he would please to have the gentleman's address, that it might be properly inserted in the printed list of subscribers.—'*I shall print no List of Subscribers*;' said Johnson, with great abruptness: but almost immediately recollecting himself, added, very complacently, 'Sir, I have two very cogent reasons for not printing any list of subscribers;—one, that I have lost all the names,—the other, that I have spent all the money."

Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when he had taken the wrong side, to shew the force and dexterity of his talents. When, therefore, he perceived that his opponent gained

answer, and I thus obtained an *Act of Oblivion*, and took care never to offend again.

ground, he had recourse to some sudden mode of robust sophistry. Once when I was pressing upon him with visible advantage, he stopped me thus:—"My dear Boswell, let's have no more of this; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune." 1781. Ætat. 72

Care, however, must be taken to distinguish between Johnson when he "talked for victory," and Johnson when he had no desire but to inform and illustrate.—"One of Johnson's principal talents (says an eminent friend of his)[5] was shewn in maintaining the wrong side of an argument, and in a splendid perversion of the truth.—If you could contrive to have his fair opinion on a subject, and without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to be victorious in argument, it was wisdom itself, not only convincing, but overpowering."

He had, however, all his life habituated himself to consider conversation as a trial of intellectual vigour and skill; and to this I think, we may venture to ascribe that unexampled richness and brilliancy which appeared in his own. As a proof at once of his eagerness for colloquial distinction, and his high notion of this eminent friend, he once addressed him thus: "——, we now have been several hours together; and you have said but one thing for which I envied you."

He disliked much all speculative desponding considerations, which tended to discourage men from diligence and exertion. He was in this like Dr. Shaw, the great traveller, who Mr. Daines Barrington told me, used to say, "I hate a *cui bono* man."

[5] [The late Right Hon. William Gerrard Hamilton. M.]

1781. Ætat. 72. Upon being asked by a friend what he should think of a man who was apt to say *non est tanti*;—"That he's a stupid fellow, Sir; (answered Johnson): What would these *tanti* men be doing the while?" When I in a low-spirited fit, was talking to him with indifference of the pursuits which generally engage us in a course of action, and enquiring a *reason* for taking so much trouble; "Sir (said he, in an animated tone) it is driving on the system of life."

He told me, that he was glad that I had, by General Oglethorpe's means, become acquainted with Dr. Shebbeare. Indeed that gentleman, whatever objections were made to him, had knowledge and abilities much above the class of ordinary writers, and deserves to be remembered as a respectable name in literature, were it only for his admirable "Letters on the English Nation," under the name of "Battista Angeloni, a Jesuit."

Johnson and Shebbeare,[6] were frequently named together, as having in former reigns had no predilection for the family of Hanover. The authour of the celebrated "Heroick Epistle to Sir William Chambers," introduces them in one line, in a list of those "who tasted the sweets of his present Majesty's reign." Such was Johnson's candid relish of the merit of that satire, that he allowed Dr. Goldsmith, as he told me, to read it to him from beginning to end, and did not refuse his praise to its execution.

Goldsmith could sometimes take adventurous liberties with him, and escape unpunished. Beauclerk told me that when Goldsmith talked of a pro-

[6] I recollect a ludicrous paragragh in the newspapers, that the King had pensioned both a *He*-bear and a *She*-bear.

ject for having a third Theatre in London solely for the exhibition of new plays, in order to deliver authours from the supposed tyranny of managers, Johnson treated it slightingly, upon which Goldsmith said, "Ay, ay, this may be nothing to you, who can now shelter yourself behind the corner of a pension;" and Johnson bore this with good-humour. 1781. Ætat. 72.

Johnson praised the Earl of Carlisle's Poems, which his Lordship had published with his name, as not disdaining to be a candidate for literary fame. My friend was of opinion, that when a man of rank appeared in that character, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed.[7] In this I think he was

[7] Men of rank and fortune however should be pretty well assured of having a real claim to the approbation of the publick, as writers, before they venture to stand forth. Dryden in his preface to "All for Love," thus expresses himself:

"Men of pleasant conversation (at least esteemed so) and endued with a trifling kind of fancy, perhaps helped out by a smattering of Latin, are ambitious to distinguish themselves from the herd of gentlemen, by their poetry:

> '*Rarus enim fermè sensus communis in illa*
> '*Fortuna.*'——

And is not this a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their wits in question, and needlessly expose their nakedness to publick view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men, which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle: If a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man, who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it, would he bring it out of his own accord to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talents, yet have the excuse that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace

1781. Ætat. 72. more liberal than Mr. William Whitehead, in his "Elegy to Lord Villiers," in which under the pretext of "superiour toils, demanding all their care," he discovers a jealousy of the great paying their court to the Muses:

"————— to the chosen few
"Who dare excel, thy fost'ring aid afford,
"Their arts, their magick powers, with honours, due
"Exalt;—but be thyself what they record."

Johnson had called twice on the Bishop of Killaloe before his Lordship set out for Ireland, having missed him the first time. He said, "It would have hung heavy on my heart if I had not seen him. No man ever paid more attention to another than he has done to me;[8] and I have neglected him, not wilfully,

was certainly in the right where he said, 'That no man is satisfied with his own condition.' A Poet is not pleased, because he is not rich; and the rich are discontented because the poets will not admit them of their number."

[8] This gave me very great pleasure, for there had been once a pretty smart altercation between Dr. Barnard and him, upon a question, whether a man could improve himself after the age of forty-five; when Johnson in a hasty humour, expressed himself in a manner not quite civil. Dr. Barnard made it the subject of a copy of pleasant verses, in which he supposed himself to learn different perfections from different men. They concluded with delicate irony:

"Johnson shall teach me how to place
"In fairest light each borrow'd grace;
"From him I'll learn to write:
"Copy his clear familiar style,
"And by the roughness of his file
"Grow, like *himself*, *polite*."

I know not whether Johnson ever saw the Poem, but I had occasion to find that as Dr. Barnard and he knew each other better, their mutual regard increased.

but from being otherwise occupied. Always, Sir, set a high value on spontaneous kindness. He whose inclination prompts him to cultivate your friendship of his own accord, will love you more than one whom you have been at pains to attach to you." 1781. Ætat. 72.

Johnson told me, that he was once much pleased to find that a carpenter, who lived near him, was very ready to shew him some things in his business which he wished to see: "It was paying (said he) respect to literature."

I asked him, if he was not dissatisfied with having so small a share of wealth, and none of those distinctions in the state which are the objects of ambition. He had only a pension of three hundred a year. Why was he not in such circumstances as to keep his coach? Why had he not some considerable office? JOHNSON. "Sir, I have never complained of the world; nor do I think that I have reason to complain. It is rather to be wondered at that I have so much. My pension is more out of the usual course of things than any instance that I have known. Here, Sir, was a man avowedly no friend to Government at the time, who got a pension without asking for it. I never courted the great; they sent for me; but I think they now give me up. They are satisfied: they have seen enough of me." Upon my observing that I could not believe this; for they must certainly be highly pleased by his conversation; conscious of his own superiority, he answered, "No, Sir; great Lords and great Ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped." This was very expressive of the effect which the force of his understanding and brilliancy of his fancy could not but produce; and, to be sure, they must have found themselves

1781. Ætat. 72. strangely diminished in his company. When I warmly declared how happy I was at all times to hear him;—"Yes, Sir, (said he); but if you were Lord Chancellor, it would not be so: you would then consider your own dignity."

There was much truth and knowledge of human nature in this remark. But certainly one should think, that in whatever elevated state of life a man who *knew* the value of the conversation of Johnson might be placed, though he might prudently avoid a situation in which he might appear lessened by comparison; yet he would frequently gratify himself in private with the participation of the rich intellectual entertainment which Johnson could furnish. Strange, however, is it, to consider how few of the great sought his society; so that if one were disposed to take occasion for satire on that account, very conspicuous objects present themselves. His noble friend, Lord Elibank, well observed, that if a great man procured an interview with Johnson, and did not wish to see him more, it shewed a mere idle curiosity, and a wretched want of relish for extraordinary powers of mind. Mrs. Thrale justly and wittily accounted for such conduct by saying, that Johnson's conversation was by much too strong for a person accustomed to obsequiousness and flattery; it was *mustard in a young child's mouth!*

One day, when I told him that I was a zealous Tory, but not enough "according to knowledge," and should be obliged to him for "a reason," he was so candid, and expressed himself so well, that I begged of him to repeat what he had said, and I wrote down as follows:

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OF TORY AND WHIG.

"A wise Tory and a wise Whig, I believe, will agree. Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are different. A high Tory makes government unintelligible: it is lost in the clouds. A violent Whig makes it impracticable: he is for allowing so much liberty to every man, that there is not power enough to govern any man. The prejudice of the Tory is for establishment; The prejudice of the Whig is for innovation. A Tory does not wish to give more real power to Government; but that Government should have more reverence. Then they differ as to the church. The Tory is not for giving more legal power to the Clergy, but wishes they should have a considerable influence, founded on the opinion of mankind: the Whig is for limiting and watching them with a narrow jealousy."

"TO MR. PERKINS.

"SIR,

"HOWEVER often I have seen you, I have hitherto forgotten the note, but I have now sent it: with my good wishes for the prosperity of you and your partner,[9] of whom, from our short conver-

[9] Mr. Barclay, a descendant of Robert Barclay, of Ury, the celebrated apologist of the people called Quakers, and remarkable for maintaining the principles of his venerable progenitor, with as much of the elegance of modern manners, as is consistent with primitive simplicity.

1781. sation, I could not judge otherwise than favourably.
Ætat. 72. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 2, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Saturday, June 2, I set out for Scotland, and had promised to pay a visit, in my way, as I sometimes did, at Southill, in Bedfordshire, at the hospitable mansion of 'Squire Dilly, the elder brother of my worthy friends, the booksellers, in the Poultry. Dr. Johnson agreed to be of the party this year, with Mr. Charles Dilly and me, and to go and see Lord Bute's seat at Luton Hoe. He talked little to us in the carriage, being chiefly occupied in reading Dr. Watson's[1] second volume of "Chemical Essays," which he liked very well, and his own "Prince of Abyssinia," on which he seemed to be intensely fixed; having told us, that he had not looked at it since it was first published. I happened to take it out of my pocket this day, and he seized upon it with avidity. He pointed out to me the following remarkable passage: "By what means (said the prince) are the Europeans thus powerful; or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiaticks and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies[2] in their ports, and give

[1] Now Bishop of Llandaff, one of the *poorest* Bishopricks in this Kingdom. His Lordship has written with much zeal to shew the propriety of *equalizing* the revenues of Bishops. He has informed us that he has burnt all his Chemical papers. The friends of our excellent constitution, now assailed on every side by innovators and levellers, would have less regretted the suppression of some of his Lordship's other writings.

[2] [The Phœnicians and Carthaginians *did* plant colonies in Europe. K.]

laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carried them back would bring us thither."—"They are more powerful, Sir, than we, (answered Imlack,) because they are wiser. Knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being." He said, "This, Sir, no man can explain otherwise." 1781. Ætat. 72.

We stopped at Welwin, where I wished much to see, in company with Johnson, the residence of the authour of "Night Thoughts," which was then possessed by his son, Mr. Young. Here some address was requisite, for I was not acquainted with Mr. Young, and had I proposed to Dr. Johnson that we should send to him, he would have checked my wish, and perhaps been offended. I therefore concerted with Mr. Dilly, that I should steal away from Dr. Johnson and him, and try what reception I could procure from Mr. Young; if unfavourable, nothing was to be said; but if agreeable, I should return and notify it to them. I hastened to Mr. Young's, found he was at home, sent in word that a gentleman desired to wait upon him, and was shewn into a parlour, where he and a young lady, his daughter, were sitting. He appeared to be a plain, civil, country gentleman; and when I begged pardon for presuming to trouble him, but that I wished much to see his place, if he would give me leave; he behaved very courteously, and answered, "By all means, Sir; we are just going to drink tea; will you sit down?" I thanked him, but said, that Dr. Johnson had come with me from London, and I must return to the inn to drink tea with him; that my name was Boswell, I had travelled

1781. Ætat. 72. with him in the Hebrides. "Sir, (said he) I should think it a great honour to see Dr. Johnson here. Will you allow me to send for him?" Availing myself of this opening, I said that "I would go myself and bring him, when he had drunk tea; he knew nothing of my calling here." Having been thus successful, I hastened back to the inn, and informed Dr. Johnson that "Mr. Young, son of Dr. Young, the authour of 'Night Thoughts,' whom I had just left, desired to have the honour of seeing him at the house where his father lived." Dr. Johnson luckily made no enquiry how this invitation had arisen, but agreed to go, and when we entered Mr. Young's parlour, he addressed him with a very polite bow, "Sir, I had a curiosity to come and see this place. I had the honour to know that great man, your father." We went into the garden, where we found a gravel walk, on each side of which was a row of trees, planted by Dr. Young, which formed a handsome Gothick arch; Dr. Johnson called it a fine grove. I beheld it with reverence.

We sat some time in the summer-house, on the outside wall of which was inscribed, "*Ambulantes in horto audiebant vocem Dei*;" and in reference to a brook by which it is situated, "*Vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam*," &c. I said to Mr. Young, that I had been told his father was cheerful. "Sir, (said he) he was too well-bred a man not to be cheerful in company; but he was gloomy when alone. He never was cheerful after my mother's death, and he had met with many disappointments." Dr. Johnson observed to me afterwards, "That this was no favourable account of Dr. Young; for it is not becoming in a man to have so little acquiescence in the ways

of Providence, as to be gloomy because he has not obtained as much preferment as he expected; nor to continue gloomy for the loss of his wife. Grief has its time." The iast part of this censure was theoretically made. Practically, we know that grief for the loss of a wife may be continued very long, in proportion as affection has been sincere. No man knew this better than Dr. Johnson. 1781. Ætat. 72.

We went into the church, and looked at the monument erected by Mr. Young to his father. Mr. Young mentioned an anecdote, that his father had received several thousand pounds of subscription-money for his "Universal Passion," but had lost it in the South-Sea.[3] Dr. Johnson thought this must be a mistake; for he had never seen a subscription-book.

Upon the road we talked of the uncertainty of profit with which authours and booksellers engage in the publication of literary works. JOHNSON. "My judgement I have found is no certain rule as to the sale of a book." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, have you been much plagued with authours sending you their works to revise?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; I have been thought a sour surly fellow. BOSWELL. "Very lucky for you, Sir,—in that respect." I must however observe, that notwithstanding what he now said, which he no doubt imagined at the time to be the fact, there was, perhaps, no man who more frequently yielded to the solicitations even of very obscure authours, to read their manuscripts, or more liberally assisted them with advice and correction.

[3] [This assertion is disproved by a comparison of dates. The first four satires of Young were published in 1725; The South-sea scheme (which appears to be meant,) was in 1720. M.]

1781. Ætat. 72. He found himself very happy at 'Squire Dilly's, where there is always abundance of excellent fare, and hearty welcome.

On Sunday, June 3, we all went to Southill church, which is very near to Mr. Dilly's house. It being the first Sunday of the month, the holy sacrament was administered, and I staid to partake of it. When I came afterwards into Dr. Johnson's room, he said, "You did right to stay and receive the communion; I had not thought of it." This seemed to imply that he did not choose to approach the altar without a previous preparation, as to which good men entertain different opinions, some holding that it is irreverent to partake of that ordinance without considerabe premeditation; others, that whoever is a sincere Christian, and in a proper frame of mind to discharge any other ritual duty of our religion, may, without scruple, discharge this most solemn one. A middle notion I believe to be the just one, which is, that communicants need not think a long train of preparatory forms indispensably necessary; but neither should they rashly and lightly venture upon so aweful and mysterious an institution. Christians must judge each for himself, what degree of retirement and self-examination is necessary upon each occasion.

Being in a frame of mind which, I hope for the felicity of human nature, many experience,—in fine weather,—at the country house of a friend,—consoled and elevated by pious exercises,—I expressed myself with an unrestrained fervour to my "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend;" "My dear Sir, I would fain be a good man; and I am very good now. I fear God, and honour the King, I wish to do no ill,

and to be benevolent to all mankind." He looked at me with a benignant indulgence; but took occasion to give me wise and salutary caution. "Do not, Sir, accustom yourself to trust to *impressions*. There is a middle state of mind between conviction and hypocrisy, of which many are conscious. By trusting to impressions, a man may gradually come to yield to them, and at length be subject to them, so as not to be a free agent, or what is the same thing in effect, to *suppose* that he is not a free agent. A man who is in that state, should not be suffered to live; if he declares he cannot help acting in a particular way, and is irresistibly impelled, there can be no confidence in him, no more than in a tyger. But, Sir, no man believes himself to be impelled irresistibly; we know that he who says he believes it, lies. Favourable impressions at particular moments, as to the state of our souls, may be deceitful and dangerous. In general no man can be sure of his acceptance with God; some, indeed, may have had it revealed to them. St. Paul, who wrought miracles, may have had a miracle wrought on himself, and may have obtained supernatural assurance of pardon, and mercy, and beatitude; yet St. Paul, though he expresses strong hope, also expresses fear, lest having preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away."

1781. Ætat. 72.

The opinion of a learned Bishop of our acquaintance, as to there being merit in religious faith, being mentioned;—JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, the most licentious man, were hell open before him, would not take the most beautiful strumpet to his arms. We must, as the Apostle says, live by faith, not by sight."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARAS[VATI MAHAL LIBRARY]

1781. Ætat. 72. I talked to him of original sin,[4] in consequence of the fall of man, and of the atonement made by our SAVIOUR. After some conversation, which he desired me to remember, he, at my request, dictated to me as follows:

"WITH respect to original sin, the enquiry is not necessary; for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.

"Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which has had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of sacrifices. Whoever, therefore, denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted, from the beginning of the world. The great sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered at the death of the MESSIAH, who is called in scripture, 'The Lamb of GOD, that taketh away the sins of the world.' To judge of the reasonableness of the

[4] Dr. Ogden, in his second sermon "On the Articles of the Christian Faith," with admirable acuteness thus addresses the opposers of that Doctrine, which accounts for the confusion, sin, and misery, which we find in this life: "It would be severe in GOD, you think, to *degrade* us to such a sad state as this, for the offence of our first parents: but you can allow him to *place* us in it without any inducement. Are our calamities lessened for not being ascribed to Adam? If your condition be unhappy, is it not still unhappy, whatever was the occasion? with the aggravation of this reflection, that if it was as good as it was at first designed, there seems to be somewhat the less reason to look for its amendment."

scheme of redemption, it must be considered as necessary to the government of the universe, that GOD should make known his perpetual and irreconcileable detestation of moral evil. He might indeed punish, and punish only the offenders; but as the end of punishment is not revenge of crimes, but propagation of virtue, it was more becoming the Divine clemency to find another manner of proceeding, less destructive to man, and at least equally powerful to promote goodness. The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. *That* punishment will both reclaim and warn, which shews evidently such abhorrence of sin in GOD, as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed it. This is effected by vicarious punishment. Nothing could more testify the opposition between the nature of GOD and moral evil, or more amply display his justice, to men and angels, to all orders and successions of beings, than that it was necessary for the highest and purest nature, even for DIVINITY itself, to pacify the demands of vengeance, by a painful death; of which the natural effect will be, that when justice is appeased, there is a proper place for the exercise of mercy; and that such propitiation shall supply, in some degree, the imperfections of our obedience, and the inefficacy of our repentance: for, obedience and repentance, such as we can perform, are still necessary. Our SAVIOUR has told us, that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill: to fulfill the typical law, by the performance of what those types had foreshewn; and the moral law, by precepts of greater purity and higher exaltation."[c]

1781. Ætat. 72.

[Here he said, "GOD bless you with it." I acknowledged myself much obliged to him; but I

1781. Ætat. 72. begged that he would go on as to the propitiation being the chief object of our most holy faith. He then dictated this one other paragraph.]

"The peculiar doctrine of Christianity is, that of an universal sacrifice, and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets only proclaimed the will and the threatenings of God. Christ satisfied his justice."

The Reverend Mr. Palmer,[5] Fellow of Queen's-College, Cambridge, dined with us. He expressed a wish that a better provision were made for parish-clerks. Johnson. "Yes, Sir, a parish-clerk should

[5] This unfortunate person, whose full name was Thomas Fysche Palmer, afterwards went to Dundee, in Scotland, where he officiated as minister to a congregation of the sect who call themselves *Unitarians*, from a notion that they distinctively worship one God, because they *deny* the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. They do not advert that the great body of the Christian Church in maintaining that mystery, maintain also the *Unity* of the Godhead: the "Trinity in Unity!—three persons and one God." The Church humbly adores the Divinity as exhibited in the holy Scriptures. The Unitarian sect vainly presumes to comprehend and define the Almighty. Mr. Palmer having heated his mind with political speculations, became so much dissatisfied with our excellent Constitution, as to compose, publish, and circulate writings, which were found to be so seditious and dangerous, that upon being found guilty by a Jury, the Court of Justiciary in Scotland sentenced him to transportation for fourteen years. A loud clamour against this sentence was made by some Members of both Houses of Parliament; but both Houses approved of it by a great majority; and he was conveyed to the settlement for convicts in New South Wales.

[Mr. T. F. Palmer was of Queen's College, in Cambridge, where he took the degree of Master of Arts in 1772, and that of S. T. B. in 1781. He died on his return from Botany Bay, in the year 1803. M.]

be a man who is able to make a will, or write a letter for any body in the parish." 1781. Ætat. 72.

I mentioned Lord Monboddo's notion[6] that the ancient Egyptians, with all their learning, and all their arts, were not only black, but woolly-haired. Mr. Palmer asked how did it appear upon examining the mummies? Dr. Johnson approved of this test.

Although upon most occasions I never heard a more strenuous advocate for the advantages of wealth, than Dr. Johnson, he this day, I know not from what caprice, took the other side. "I have not observed (said he) that men of very large fortunes enjoy any thing extraordinary that makes happiness. What has the Duke of Bedford? What has the Duke of Devonshire? The only great instance that I have ever known of the enjoyment of wealth was, that of Jamaica Dawkins, who going to visit Palmyra, and hearing that the way was infested by robbers, hired a troop of Turkish horse to guard him."

Dr. Gibbons, the Dissenting minister, being mentioned, he said, "I took to Dr. Gibbons." And addressing himself to Mr. Charles Dilly, added, "I shall be glad to see him. Tell him, if he'll call on me, and dawdle over a dish of tea in an afternoon, I shall take it kind."

The Reverend Mr. Smith, Vicar of Southill, a very respectable man, with a very agreeable family, sent an invitation to us to drink tea. I remarked Dr. Johnson's very respectful politeness. Though always fond of changing the scene, he said, "We must have Mr. Dilly's leave. We cannot go from your

[6] Taken from Heredotus.

1781. Ætat. 72. house, Sir, without your permission." We all went, and were well satisfied with our visit. I however remember nothing particular, except a nice distinction which Dr. Johnson made with respect to the power of memory, maintaining that forgetfulness was a man's own fault. "To remember and to recollect (said he) are different things. A man has not the power to recollect what is not in his mind; but when a thing is in his mind he may remember it."

The remark was occasioned by my leaning back on a chair, which a little before I had perceived to be broken, and pleading forgetfulness as an excuse. "Sir, (said he,) its being broken was certainly in your mind."

When I observed that a housebreaker was in general very timorous;—JOHNSON. "No wonder, Sir; he is afraid of being shot getting *into* a house, or hanged when he has got *out* of it."

He told us, that he had in one day written six sheets of a translation from the French; adding, "I should be glad to see it now. I wish that I had copies of all the pamphlets written against me, as it is said Pope had. Had I known that I should make so much noise in the world, I should have been at pains to collect them. I believe there is hardly a day in which there is not something about me in the news-papers."

On Monday, June 4, we all went to Luton-Hoe, to see Lord Bute's magnificent seat, for which I had obtained a ticket. As we entered the park, I talked in a high style of my old friendship with Lord Mountstuart, and said, "I shall probably be much at this place." The Sage, aware of human vicissitudes, gently checked me: "Don't you be too sure of

that." He made two or three peculiar observations; as when shewn the botanical garden, "Is not *every* garden a botanical garden?" When told that there was a shrubbery to the extent of several miles: "That is making a very foolish use of the ground; a little of it is very well." When it was proposed that we should walk on the pleasure-ground; "Don't let us fatigue ourselves. Why should we walk there? Here's a fine tree, let's get to the top of it." But upon the whole, he was very much pleased. He said, "This is one of the places I do not regret having come to see. It is a very stately place, indeed; in the house magnificence is not sacrificed to convenience, nor convenience to magnificence. The library is very splendid; the dignity of the rooms is very great; and the quantity of pictures is beyond expectation, beyond hope." 1781. Ætat. 72.

It happened without any previous concert, that we visited the seat of Lord Bute upon the King's birthday; we dined and drank his Majesty's health at an inn, in the village of Luton.

In the evening I put him in mind of his promise to favour me with a copy of his celebrated Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, and he was at last pleased to comply with this earnest request, by dictating it to me from his memory; for he believed that he himself had no copy. There was an animated glow in his countenance while he thus recalled his high-minded indignation.

He laughed heartily at a ludicrous action in the Court of Session, in which I was Counsel. The Society of *Procurators*, or Attornies, entitled to practise in the inferiour courts at Edinburgh, had obtained a royal charter, in which they had taken care

1781. Ætat. 72. to have their ancient designation of *Procurators* changed into that of *Solicitors*, from a notion, as they supposed, that it was more *genteel*; and this new title they displayed by a publick advertisement for a *General Meeting* at their HALL.

It has been said, that the Scottish nation is not distinguished for humour; and, indeed, what happened on this occasion may in some degree justify the remark; for although this society had contrived to make themselves a very prominent object for the ridicule of such as might stoop to it, the only joke to which it gave rise, was the following paragraph, sent to the newspaper called "*The Caledonian Mercury*."

"A correspondent informs us, that the Worshipful Society of *Chaldeans*, *Cadies*, or *Running-Stationers* of this city are resolved, in imitation, and encouraged by the singular success of their brethren, of an *equally respectable* Society, to apply for a Charter of their Privileges, particularly of the sole privilege of PROCURING, in the most extensive sense of the word, exclusive of chairmen, porters, penny-post men, and other *inferiour* ranks; their brethren the R—Y—L S—LL—RS, *alias* P—C—RS, *before the* INFERIOUR Courts of this City, always excepted.

"Should the Worshipful Society be successful, they are farther resolved not to be *puffed up* thereby, but to demean themselves with more equanimity and decency than their *R-y-l*, *learned*, and *very modest* brethren above mentioned have done, upon their late dignification and exaltation."

A majority of the members of the Society prosecuted Mr. Robertson, the publisher of the paper, for damages: and the first judgement of the whole Court

very wisely dismissed the action: *Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis.* But a new trial or review was granted upon a petition, according to the forms in Scotland. This petition I was engaged to answer, and Dr. Johnson, with great alacrity furnished me this evening with what follows: 1781. Ætat. 72.

"All injury is either of the person, the fortune, or the fame. Now it is a certain thing, it is proverbially known, that *a jest breaks no bones.* They never have gained half-a-crown less in the whole profession since this mischievous paragraph has appeared; and, as to their reputation, What is their reputation but an instrument of getting money? If, therefore, they have lost no money, the question upon reputation may be answered by a very old position,—*De minimis non curat Prætor.*

"Whether there was, or was not, an *animus injurandi*, is not worth enquiring, if no *injuria* can be proved. But the truth is, there was no *animus injuriandi.* It was only an *animus irritandi*,[7] which, happening to be exercised upon a *genus irritabile*, produced unexpected violence of resentment. Their irritability arose only from an opinion of their own importance, and their delight in their new exaltation. What might have been borne by a *Procurator* could not be borne by a *Solicitor.* Your Lordships well know, that *honores mutant mores.* Titles and dignities play strongly on the fancy. As a madman is apt to think himself grown suddenly great, so he that grows suddenly great is apt to borrow a little from the madman. To co-operate with their resentment would be to promote their phrenzy; nor is it

[7] Mr. Robertson altered this word to *jocandi*, he having found in Blackstone that to *irritate* is actionable.

1781. possible to guess to what they might proceed, if to
Ætat. 72. the new title of Solicitor, should be added the elation of victory and triumph.

"We consider your Lordships as the protectors of our rights, and the guardians of our virtues; but believe it not included in your high office, that you should flatter our vices, or solace our vanity; and, as vanity only dictates this prosecution, it is humbly hoped your Lordships will dismiss it.

"If every attempt, however light or ludicrous, to lessen another's reputation, is to be punished by a judicial sentence, what punishment can be sufficiently severe for him who attempts to diminish the reputation of the Supreme Court of Justice, by reclaiming upon a cause already determined, without any change in the state of the question? Does it not imply in hopes that the Judges will change their opinion? Is not uncertainty and inconstancy in the highest degree disreputable to a Court? Does it not suppose, that the former judgement was temerarious or negligent? Does it not lessen the confidence of the publick? Will it not be said, that *jus est aut incognitum, aut vagum?* and will not the consequence be drawn, *misera est servitus?* Will not the rules of action be obscure? Will not he who knows himself wrong to-day, hope that the Courts of Justice will think him right to-morrow? Surely, my Lords, these are attempts of dangerous tendency, which the Solicitors, as men versed in the law, should have foreseen and avoided. It was natural for an ignorant printer to appeal from the Lord Ordinary; but from lawyers, the descendants of lawyers, who have practised for three hundred years, and have now raised themselves to a higher denomination, it might

be expected, that they should know the reverence due to a judicial determination; and, having been once dismissed, should sit down in silence." 1781. Ætat. 72.

I am ashamed to mention, that the Court, by a plurality of voices, without having a single additional circumstance before them, reversed their own judgement, made a serious matter of this dull and foolish joke, and adjudged Mr. Robertson to pay to the Society five pounds (sterling money) and costs of suit. The decision will seem strange to English lawyers.

On Tuesday, June 5, Johnson was to return to London. He was very pleasant at breakfast; I mentioned a friend of mine having resolved never to marry a pretty woman. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is a very foolish resolution to resolve not to marry a pretty woman. Beauty is of itself very estimable. No, Sir, I would prefer a pretty woman, unless there are objections to her. A pretty woman may be foolish; a pretty woman may be wicked; a pretty woman may not like me. But there is no such danger in marrying a pretty woman as is apprehended; she will not be persecuted if she does not invite persecution. A pretty woman, if she has a mind to be wicked, can find a readier way than another; and that is all."

I accompanied him in Mr. Dilly's chaise to Shefford, where talking of Lord Bute's never going to Scotland, he said, "As an Englishman, I should wish all the Scotch gentlemen should be educated in England; Scotland would become a province; they would spend all their rents in England." This is a subject of much consequence, and much delicacy. The advantage of an English education is unques-

tionably very great to Scotch gentlemen of talents and ambition; and regular visits to Scotland, and perhaps other means, might be effectually used to prevent them from being totally estranged from their native country, any more than a Cumberland or Northumberland gentleman, who has been educated in the South of England. I own, indeed, that it is no small misfortune for Scotch gentlemen, who have neither talents nor ambition, to be educated in England, where they may be perhaps distinguished only by a nick-name, lavish their fortune in giving expensive entertainments to those who laugh at them, and saunter about as mere idle insignificant hangers-on even upon the foolish great; when if they had been judiciously brought up at home, they might have been comfortable and creditable members of society.

At Shefford I had another affectionate parting from my reverend friend, who was taken up by the Bedford coach and carried to the metropolis. I went with Messieurs Dilly, to see some friends at Bedford; dined with the officers of the militia of the county, and next day proceeded on my journey.

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"How welcome your account of yourself and your invitation to your new house was to me, I need not tell you, who consider our friendship not only as formed by choice, but as matured by time. We have been now long enough acquainted to have many images in common, and therefore to have a source

of conversation which neither the learning nor the wit of a new companion can supply. 1781. Ætat. 72.

"My Lives are now published; and if you will tell me whither I shall send them, that they may come to you, I will take care that you shall not be without them.

"You will, perhaps, be glad to hear, that Mrs. Thrale is disincumbered of her brewhouse; and that it seemed to the purchaser so far from an evil, that he was content to give for it an hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds. Is the nation ruined?

"Please to make my respectful compliments to Lady Rothes, and keep me in the memory of all the little dear family, particularly Mrs. Jane.

"I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"Bolt-court, June 16, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Johnson's charity to the poor was uniform and extensive, both from inclination and principle. He not only bestowed liberally out of his own purse, but what is more difficult as well as rare, would beg from others, when he had proper objects in view. This he did judiciously as well as humanely. Mr. Philip Metcalfe, tells me, that when he has asked him for some money for persons in distress, and Mr. Metcalfe has offered what Johnson thought too much, he insisted on taking less, saying "No, no, Sir; we must not *pamper* them."

I am indebted to Mr. Malone, one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's executors, for the following note, which was found among his papers after his death, and which, we may presume, his unaffected modesty

1781. Ætat. 72. prevented him from communicating to me with the other letters from Dr. Johnson with which he was pleased to furnish me. However slight in itself, as it does honour to that illustrious painter, and most amiable man, I am happy to introduce it.

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT was not before yesterday that I received your splendid benefaction. To a hand so liberal in distributing, I hope nobody will envy the power of acquiring.

"I am, dear Sir,
"Your obliged and most humble servant,
"June 23, 1781. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THOMAS ASTLE, ESQ.

"SIR,

"I AM ashamed that you have been forced to call so often for your books, but it has been by no fault on either side. They have never been out of my hands, nor have I ever been at home without seeing you; for to see a man so skilful in the antiquities of my country, is an opportunity of improvement not willingly to be missed.

"Your notes on Alfred[8] appear to me very judicious and accurate, but they are too few. Many

[8] The Will of King Alfred, alluded to in this letter, from the original Saxon, in the library of Mr. Astle, has been printed at the expence of the University of Oxford.

things familiar to you, are unknown to me, and to most others; and you must not think too favourably of your readers; by supposing them knowing, you will leave them ignorant. Measure of land, and value of money, it is of great importance to state with care. Had the Saxons any gold coin? 1781. Ætat. 72.

"I have much curiosity after the manners and transactions of the middle ages, but have wanted either diligence or opportunity, or both. You, Sir, have great opportunities, and I wish you both diligence and success.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"July 17, 1781. "Sam. Johnson."

The following curious anecdote I insert in Dr. Burney's own words. "Dr. Burney related to Dr. Johnson the partiality which his writings had excited in a friend of Dr. Burney's, the late Mr. Bewley, well known in Norfolk by the name of the *Philosopher of Massingham*: who, from the Ramblers and Plan of his Dictionary, and long before the authour's fame was established by the Dictionary itself, or any other work, had conceived such a reverence for him, that he earnestly begged Dr. Burney to give him the cover of his first letter he had received from him, as a relick of so estimable a writer. This was in 1755. In 1760, when Dr. Burney visited Dr. Johnson at the Temple in London, where he had then Chambers, he happened to arrive there before he was up; and being shewn into the room where he was to breakfast, finding himself alone, he examined the contents of the apartment, to try whether he could undiscovered steal any thing to send to his friend Bewley, as another relick of the admirable Dr.

1781. Ætat. 72. Johnson. But finding nothing better to his purpose, he cut some bristles off his hearth-broom, and enclosed them in a letter to his country enthusiast, who received them with due reverence. The Doctor was so sensible of the honour done him by a man of genius and science, to whom he was an utter stranger, that he said to Dr. Burney, 'Sir, there is no man possessed of the smallest portion of modesty, but must be flattered with the admiration of such a man. I'll give him a set of my Lives, if he will do me the honour to accept of them.' In this he kept his word; and Dr. Burney had not only the pleasure of gratifying his friend with a present more worthy of his acceptance than the segment from the hearth broom, but soon after introducing him to Dr. Johnson himself in Bolt-court, with whom he had the satisfaction of conversing a considerable time, not a fortnight before his death; which happened in St. Martin's-street, during his visit to Dr. Burney, in the house where the great Sir Isaac Newton had lived and died before."

In one of his little memorandum books is the following minute;

"August 9, 3 P. M. ætat. 72, in the summer-house at Streatham.

"After innumerable resolutions formed and neglected, I have retired hither, to plan a life of greater diligence, in hope that I may yet be useful, and be daily better prepared to appear before my Creator and my Judge, from whose infinite mercy I humbly call for assistance and support.

"My purpose is,

"To pass eight hours every day in some serious employment.

"Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language, for my settled study." 1781. Ætat. 72.

How venerably pious does he appear in these moments of solitude, and how spirited are his resolutions for the improvement of his mind, even in elegant literature, at a very advanced period of life, and when afflicted with many complaints.

In autumn he went to Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, and Ashbourne, for which very good reasons might be given in the conjectural yet positive manner of writers, who are proud to account for every event which they relate. He himself, however, says, "The motives of my journey I hardly know; I omitted it last year, and am not willing to miss it again."[9] But some good considerations arise, amongst which is the kindly recollection of Mr. Hector, surgeon of Birmingham. "Hector is likewise an old friend, the only companion of my childhood that passed through the school with me. We have always loved one another; perhaps we may be made better by some serious conversation, of which however I have no distinct hope."

He says too, "At Lichfield, my native place, I hope to shew a good example by frequent attendance on public worship."

My correspondence with him during the rest of this year was, I know not why, very scanty, and all on my side. I wrote him one letter to introduce Mr. Sinclair (now Sir John) the member for Caithness, to his acquaintance; and informed him in another,

[9] Prayers and Meditations, p. 201.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

that my wife had again been affected with alarming symptoms of illness.

1782. Ætat. 73. In 1782, his complaints increased, and the history of his life this year, is little more than a mournful recital of the variations of his illness, in the midst of which, however, it will appear from his letters, that the powers of his mind were in no degree impaired.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I SIT down to answer your letter on the same day in which I received it, and am pleased that my first letter of the year is to you. No man ought to be at ease while he knows himself in the wrong; and I have not satisfied myself with my long silence. The letter relating to Mr. Sinclair however, was, I believe, never brought.

"My health has been tottering this last year: and I can give no very laudable account of my time. I am always hoping to do better than I have ever hitherto done.

"My journey to Ashbourne and Staffordshire was not pleasant; for what enjoyment has a sick man visiting the sick?—Shall we ever have another frolick like our journey to the Hebrides?

"I hope that dear Mrs. Boswell will surmount her complants; in losing her you will lose your anchor, and be tost, without stability, by the waves of life.[1] I wish both her and you very many years, and very happy.

[1] The truth of this has been proved by sad experience. [Mrs. Boswell died June 4, 1789. M.]

"For some months past I have been so withdrawn from the world, that I can send you nothing particular. All your friends, however, are well, and will be glad of your return to London. I am, dear Sir, 1782. Ætat. 73.

"Your's most affectionately,

"January 5, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

At a time when he was less able than he had once been to sustain a shock, he was suddenly deprived of Mr. Levett, which event he thus communicated to Dr. Lawrence.

"SIR,

"OUR old friend, Mr. Levett, who was last night eminently cheerful, died this morning. The man who lay in the same room, hearing an uncommon noise, got up and tried to make him speak, but without effect. He then called Mr. Holder, the apothecary, who, though when he came he thought him dead, opened a vein, but could draw no blood. So has ended the long life of a very useful and very blameless man. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Jan. 17, 1778. "SAM. JOHNSON.

In one of his memorandum-books in my possession, is the following entry: "January 20, Sunday. Robert Levett was buried in the church-yard of Bridewell, between one and two in the afternoon. He died on Thursday 17, about seven in the morning, by an instantaneous death. He was an old and

1782. faithful friend; I have known him from about 46.
Ætat. 73. *Commendavi.* May God have mercy on him. May he have mercy on me."

Such was Johnson's affectionate regard for Levett,[2] that he honoured his memory with the following pathetick verses;

"Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,
"As on we toil from day to day,
"By sudden blast or slow decline
"Our social comforts drop away.

"Well try'd through many a varying year,
"See Levett to the grave descend;
"Officious, innocent, sincere,
"Of every friendless name the friend.

"Yet still he fills affection's eye,
"Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind,
"Nor, letter'd arrogance,[3] deny
"Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.

"When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
"And hov'ring Death prepar'd the blow,
"His vigorous remedy display'd
"The power of art without the show.

"In Misery's darkest caverns known,
"His ready help was ever nigh,
"Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
"And lonely Want retir'd to die.[4]

[2] See an account of him in "The Gentleman's Magazine," Feb. 1785.

[3] In both editions of Sir John Hawkins's Life of Dr. Johnson, "letter'd *ignorance*," is printed.

[4] Johnson repeated this line to me thus:

"No summons mock'd by chill delay,
"No petty gains disdain'd by pride;
"The modest wants of every day
"The toil of every day supply'd.

"His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
"Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
"And sure the eternal Master found
"His single talent well employ'd.

"The busy day, the peaceful night,
"Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;
"His frame was firm, his powers were bright,
"Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

"Then, with no throbs of firy pain,
"No cold gradations of decay,
"Death broke at once the vital chain,
"And freed his soul the nearest way."

In one of Johnson's registers of this year, there occurs the following curious passage: "Jan. 20. The Ministry is dissolved. I prayed with Francis, and gave thanks."[5] It has been the subject of discussion, whether there are two distinct particulars mentioned here? Or that we are to understand the giving of thanks to be in consequence of the dissolution of the Ministry? In support of the last of these conjectures may be urged his mean opinion of that Ministry, which has frequently appeared in the course of this work; and it is strongly confirmed by what he said on the subject to Mr. Seward:—"I

"And Labour steals an hour to die."
But he afterwards altered it to the present reading.

[5] Prayers and Meditations, p. 209.

1782. Ætat. 73. am glad the ministry is removed. Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced a country. If they sent a messenger into the City to take up a printer, the messenger was taken up instead of the printer, and committed by the sitting Alderman. If they sent one army to the relief of another, the first army was defeated and taken before the second arrived. I will not say that what they did was always wrong; but it was always done at a wrong time."

"TO MRS. STRAHAN.

"DEAR MADAM,

"MRS. WILLIAMS shewed me your kind letter. This little habitation is now but a melancholy place, clouded with the gloom of disease and death. Of the four inmates, one has been suddenly snatched away; two are oppressed by very afflictive and dangerous illness; and I tried yesterday to gain some relief by a third bleeding, from a disorder which has for some time distressed me, and I think myself to day much better.

"I am glad, dear Madam, to hear that you are so far recovered as to go to Bath. Let me once more entreat you to stay till your health is not only obtained, but confirmed. Your fortune is such as that no moderate expences deserves your care; and you have a husband, who, I believe, does not regard it. Stay, therefore, till you are quite well. I am, for my part, very much deserted; but complaint is useless. I hope GOD will bless you, and I desire you to form the same wish for me. I am, dear Madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"Feb. 4, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO EDMOND MALONE, ESQ.

"SIR,

"I HAVE for many weeks been so much out of order, that I have gone out only in a coach to Mrs. Thrale's, where I can use all the freedom that sickness requires. Do not, therefore, take it amiss, that I am not with you and Dr. Farmer. I hope hereafter to see you often. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Feb. 27, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HOPE I grow better, and shall soon be able to enjoy the kindness of my friends. I think this wild adherence to Chatterton[6] more unaccountable than the obstinate defence of Ossian. In Ossian there is a national pride, which may be forgiven,

[6] [This Note was in answer to one which accompanied one of the earliest pamphlets on the subject of Chatterton's forgery, entitled "Cursory Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley," &c. Mr. Thomas Warton's very able "Inquiry" appeared about three months afterwards: and Mr. Tyrwhitt's admirable "Vindication of his Appendix," in the summer of the same year, left the believers in his daring imposture nothing but "the resolution to say again what had been said before." Daring, however, as this fiction was, and wild as was the adherence to Chatterton, both were greatly exceeded in 1795 and the following year, by a still more audacious imposture, and the pertinacity of one of its adherents, who has immortalized his name by publishing a bulky volume, of which the direct and manifest object was, to prove the authenticity of certain papers attributed to Shakspeare, after the fabricator of the spurious trash had publickly acknowledged the imposture! M.]

1782. Ætat. 73. though it cannot be applauded. In Chatterton there is nothing but the resolution to say again what has once been said. I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"March 2, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

These short letters shew the regard which Dr. Johnson entertained for Mr. Malone, who the more he is known is the more highly valued. It is much to be regretted that Johnson was prevented from sharing the elegant hospitality of that gentleman's table, at which he would in every respect have been fully gratified. Mr. Malone, who has so ably succeeded him as an Editor of Shakspeare, has, in his Preface, done great and just honour to Johnson's memory.

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I WENT away from Lichfield ill, and have had a troublesome time with my breath; for some weeks I have been disordered by a cold, of which I could not get the violence abated, till I had been let blood three times. I have not, however, been so bad but that I could have written, and am sorry that I neglected it.

"My dwelling is but melancholy; both Williams, and Desmoulins, and myself, are very sickly: Frank is not well; and poor Levett died in his bed the other day, by a sudden stroke; I suppose not one minute passed between health and death; so uncertain are human things.

"Such is the appearance of the world about me: I hope your scenes are more cheerful. But what-

ever befalls us, though it is wise to be serious, it is useless and foolish, and perhaps sinful, to be gloomy. Let us, therefore, keep ourselves as easy as we can; though the loss of friends will be felt, and poor Levett had been a faithful adherent for thirty years. 1782. Ætat. 73.

"Forgive me, my dear love, the omission of writing: I hope to mend that and my other faults. Let me have your prayers.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, and Miss Adey, and Mr. Pearson, and the whole company of my friends. I am, my dear,

"Your most humble servant,

"London, March 2, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"DEAR MADAM,

"MY last was but a dull letter, and I know not that this will be much more cheerful; I am, however, willing to write, because you are desirous to hear from me.

"My disorder has now begun its ninth week, for it is not yet over. I was last Thursday blooded for the fourth time, and have since found myself much relieved, but I am very tender and easily hurt; so that since we parted I have had but little comfort, but I hope that the spring will recover me; and that in the summer I shall see Lichfield again, for I will not delay my visit another year to the end of autumn.

"I have, by advertising, found poor Mr. Levett's brothers in Yorkshire, who will take the little he has left: it is but little, yet it will be welcome, for I believe they are of very low condition.

1782. Ætat. 73. "To be sick, and to see nothing but sickness and death, is but a gloomy state; but I hope better times, even in this world, will come, and whatever this world may with-hold or give, we shall be happy in a better state. Pray for me, my dear Lucy.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, and Miss Adey, and my old friend, Hetty Bailey, and to all the Lichfield ladies. I am, dear Madam,

"Yours, affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
March 19, 1782.

On the day on which this letter was written, he thus feelingly mentions his respected friend, and physician, Dr. Lawrence:—"Poor Lawrence has almost lost the sense of hearing; and I have lost the conversation of a learned, intelligent, and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Lawrence is one of the best men whom I have known.—'*Nostrum omnium miserere Deus.*'"[7]

It was Dr. Johnson's custom when he wrote to Dr. Lawrence concerning his own health, to use the Latin language. I have been favoured by Miss Lawrence with one of these letters as a specimen:

T. LAWRENCIO, *Medico, S.*

"NOVUM *frigus, nova tussis, nova spirandi difficultas, novam sanguinis missionem suadent, quam tamen te inconsulto nolim fieri. Ad te venire vix possum, nec est cur ad me venias. Licere vel non licere une*

[7] Prayers and Meditations, p. 207.

verbo dicendum est; cætera mihi et Holdero[8] *relique-ris. Si per te licet, imperatur nuncio Holderum ad me deducere.* 1782. Ætat. 73.

"*Maiis Calendis*, 1782.

"*Postquàm tu discesseris, quò me vertam?*"[9]

[8] Mr. Holder, in the Strand, Dr. Johnson's apothecary.

[9] Soon after the above letter, Dr. Lawrence left London, but not before the palsy had made so great a progress as to render him unable to write for himself. The following are extracts from letters addressed by Dr. Johnson to one of his daughters:

"You will easily believe with what gladness I read that you had heard once again that voice to which we have all so often delighted to attend. May you often hear it. If we had his mind, and his tongue, we could spare the rest.

"I am not vigorous, but much better than when dear Dr. Lawrence held my pulse the last time. Be so kind as to let me know, from one little interval to another, the state of his body. I am pleased that he remembers me, and hope that it never can be possible for me to forget him. July 22, 1782.

"I am much delighted even with the small advances which dear Dr. Lawrence makes towards recovery. If we could have again but his mind, and his tongue in his mind, and his right hand, we should not much lament the rest. I should not despair of helping the swelled hand by electricity, if it were frequently and diligently supplied.

"Let me know from time to time whatever happens; and I hope I need not tell you, how much I am interested in every change, Aug. 26, 1782."

"Though the account with which you favoured me in your last letter could not give me the pleasure that I wished, yet I was glad to receive it; for my affection to my dear friend makes me desirous of knowing his state, whatever it be. I beg, therefore, that you continue to let me know, from time to time, all that you observe.

"Many fits of severe illness have, for about three months past, forced my kind physician often upon my mind. I am now better; and hope gratitude, as well as distress, can be a motive to remembrance. Bolt-court, Fleet-street, Feb. 4, 1783."

1782.
Ætat. 73.

"TO CAPTAIN LANGTON,[1] IN ROCHESTER.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT is now long since we saw one another; and, whatever has been the reason, neither you have written to me, nor I to you. To let friendship die away by negligence and silence, is certainly not wise. It is voluntarily to throw away one of the greatest comforts of this weary pilgrimage, of which when it is, as it must be taken finally away, he that travels on alone, will wonder how his esteem could be so little. Do not forget me; you see that I do not forget you. It is pleasing in the silence of solitude to think, that there is one at least, however distant, of whose benevolence there is little doubt, and whom there is yet hope of seeing again.

"Of my life, from the time we parted, the history is mournful. The spring of last year deprived me of Thrale, a man whose eye for fifteen years had scarcely been turned upon me but with respect or tenderness; for such another friend, the general course of human things will not suffer man to hope. I passed the Summer at Streatham, but there was no Thrale; and having idled away the summer with a weakly body and neglected mind, I made a journey to Staffordshire on the edge of winter. The season was dreary, I was sickly, and found the friends sickly whom I went to see. After a sorrowful sojourn, I returned to a habitation possessed for the present by two sick women, where my dear old

[1] Mr. Langton being at this time on duty at Rochester, he is addressed by his military title.

friend, Mr. Levett, to whom as he used to tell me, I owe your acquaintance, died a few weeks ago, suddenly in his bed; there passed not, I believe, a minute between health and death. At night, as at Mrs. Thrale's, I was musing in my chamber, I thought with uncommon earnestness, that however I might alter my mode of life, or whithersover I might remove, I would endeavour to retain Levett about me; in the morning my servant brought me word that Levett was called to another state, a state for which, I think, he was not unprepared, for he was very useful to the poor. How much soever I valued him, I now wish that I had valued him more.[2] 1782. Ætat. 73.

"I have myself been ill more than eight weeks of a disorder, from which at the expence of about fifty ounces of blood, I hope I am now recovering.

"You, dear Sir, have, I hope, a more cheerful scene; you see George fond of his book, and the pretty misses airy and lively, with my own little Jenny equal to the best: and in whatever can contribute to your quiet or pleasure, you have Lady Rothes ready to concur. May whatever you enjoy of good be increased, and whatever you suffer of evil be diminished. I am, dear Sir,

"Your humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
March 20, 1782.

[2] Johnson has here expressed a sentiment similar to that contained in one of Shenstone's stanzas, to which in his life of that poet he has given high praise:

"I prized every hour that went by,
"Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
"But now they are gone and I sigh,
"And I grieve that I prized them no more."

J. B.—O.]

1782. Ætat. 73.

"TO MR. HECTOR, IN BIRMINGHAM.[3]

"DEAR SIR,

"I hope I do not very grossly flatter myself to imagine that you and dear Mrs. Careless[4] will be glad to hear some account of me. I performed the journey to London with very little inconvenience, and came safe to my habitation, where I found nothing but ill health, and, of consequence, very little cheerfulness. I then went to visit a little way into the country, where I got a complaint by a cold which has hung eight weeks upon me, and from which I am, at the expence of fifty ounces of blood, not yet free. I am afraid I must once more owe my recovery to warm weather, which seems to make no advances towards us.

"Such is my health, which will, I hope, soon grow better. In other respects I have no reason to complain. I know not that I have written any thing more generally commended than the Lives of the Poets; and have found the world willing enough to caress me, if my health had invited me to be in much company; but this season I have been almost wholly employed in nursing myself.

"When summer comes I hope to see you again, and will not put off my visit to the end of the year. I have lived so long in London, that I did not remember the difference of seasons.

[3] A part of this letter having been torn off, I have, from the evident meaning, supplied a few words and half words at the ends and beginning of lines.

[4] See Vol. II. p. 479.

"Your health, when I saw you, was much improved. You will be prudent enough not to put it in danger. I hope, when we meet again, we shall congratulate each other upon fair prospects of longer life; though what are the pleasures of the longest life, when placed in comparison with a happy death? I am, dear Sir, 1782. Ætat. 73.

"Your's most affectionately,

"London, March 21, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

[*Without a date, but supposed to be about this time.*]

"DEAR SIR,

"THAT you and dear Mrs. Careless should have care or curiosity about my health, gives me that pleasure which every man feels from finding himself not forgotten. In age we feel again that love of our native place and our early friends, which in the bustle or amusements of middle life, were overborne and suspended. You and I should now naturally cling to one another: we have outlived most of those who could pretend to rival us in each other's kindness. In our walk through life we have dropped our companions, and are now to pick up such as chance may offer us, or to travel on alone. You, indeed, have a sister, with whom you can divide the day: I have no natural friend left; but Providence has been pleased to preserve me from neglect; I have not wanted such alleviations of life as friendship could supply. My health has been, from my twentieth year, such as has seldom afforded me a single day of ease; but it is at least not worse: and I sometimes make myself believe that it is better.

1782. Ætat. 73. My disorders are, however, still sufficiently oppressive.

"I think of seeing Staffordshire again this autumn, and intend to find my way through Birmingham, where I hope to see you and dear Mrs. Careless well. I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate friend,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him at different dates; regretted that I could not come to London this spring, but hoped we should meet somewhere in the summer; mentioned the state of my affairs, and suggested hopes of some preferment; informed him, that as "The Beauties of Johnson," had been published in London, some obscure scribbler had published at Edinburgh, what he called "The Deformities of Johnson."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"THE pleasure which we used to receive from each other on Good-Friday and Easter-day, we must be this year content to miss. Let us, however, pray for each other, and hope to see one another yet from time to time with mutual delight. My disorder has been a cold, which impeded the organs of respiration, and kept me many weeks in a state of great uneasiness; but by repeated phlebotomy it is now relieved; and next to the recovery of Mrs. Boswell, I flatter myself, that you will rejoice at mine.

"What we shall do in the summer, it is yet too early to consider. You want to know what you shall do now; I do not think this time of bustle and

confusion[5] like to produce any advantage to you. Every man has those to reward and gratify who have contributed to his advancement. To come hither with such expectations at the expence of borrowed money, which, I find, you know not where to borrow, can hardly be considered prudent. I am sorry to find, what your solicitations seem to imply, that you have already gone the whole length of your credit. This is to set the quiet of your whole life at hazard. If you anticipate your inheritance, you can at last inherit nothing; all that you receive must pay for the past. You must get a place, or pine in penury, with the empty name of a great estate. Poverty, my dear friend, is so great an evil, and pregnant with so much temptation, and so much misery, that I cannot but earnestly enjoin you to avoid it. Live on what you have; live if you can on less; do not borrow either for vanity or pleasure; the vanity will end in shame, and the pleasure in regret: stay therefore at home, till you have saved money for your journey hither.

1782. Ætat. 73.

"The Beauties of Johnson' are said to have got money to the collector; if the 'Deformities' have the same success, I shall be still a more extensive benefactor.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who is I hope reconciled to me; and to the young people whom I never have offended.

"You never told me the success of your plea against the Solicitors. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate,

"London, March 28, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[5] [On the preceding day the Ministry had been changed. M.]

1782. Ætat. 73. Notwithstanding his afflicted state of body and mind this year, the following correspondence affords a proof not only of his benevolence and conscientious readiness to relieve a good man from errour, but by his cloathing one of the sentiments in his "Rambler" in different language, not inferiour to that of the original, shews his extraordinary command of clear and forcible expression.

A clergyman at Bath wrote to him, that in "The Morning Chronicle," a passage in "The Beauties of Johnson," article DEATH, had been pointed out as supposed by some readers to recommend suicide, the words being, "To die is the fate of man; but to die with lingering anguish is generally his folly;" and respectfully suggesting to him, that such an erroneous notion of any sentence in the writings of an acknowledged friend of religion and virtue, should not pass uncontradicted.

Johnson thus answered the clergyman's letter:

TO THE REVEREND MR. ———, AT BATH.

"SIR,

"BEING now in the country in a state of recovery, as I hope, from a very oppressive disorder, I cannot neglect the acknowledgement of your Christian letter. The book called "The Beauties of Johnson," is the production of I know not whom; I never saw it but by casual inspection, and considered myself as utterly disengaged from its consequences. Of the passage you mention, I remember some notice in some paper; but knowing that it must be misrepresented, I thought of it no more, nor do I know where to find it in my own books. I am accustomed to think little of newspapers; but an opinion so weighty and serious as yours has determined me

to do, what I should without your seasonable admonition, have omitted: and I will direct my thought to be shewn in its true state.[6] If I could find the passage I would direct you to it. I suppose the tenour is this:—' Acute diseases are the immediate and inevitable strokes of Heaven; but of them the pain is short, and the conclusion speedy; chronical disorders, by which we are suspended in tedious torture between life and death, are commonly the effect of our own misconduct and intemperance. To die, &c.'—This, Sir, you see is all true and all blameless. I hope some time in the next week, to have all rectified. My health has been lately much shaken; if you favour me with any answer, it will be a comfort to me to know that I have your prayers.

"I am, &c.

"May 15, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

This letter, as might be expected, had its full effect, and the clergyman acknowledged it in grateful and pious terms.[7]

[6] What follows, appeared in the Morning Chronicle of May 29, 1782.—" A correspondent having mentioned, in the Morning Chronicle of December 12, the last clause of the following paragraph, as seeming to favour suicide; we are requested to print the whole passage, that its true meaning may appear, which is not to recommend suicide but exercise.

" Exercise cannot secure us from that dissolution to which we are decreed; but while the soul and body continue united, it can make the association pleasing, and give probable hopes that they shall be disjoined by an easy separation. It was a principle among the antients, that acute diseases are from Heaven, and chronical from ourselves; the dart of death, indeed, falls from Heaven, but we poison it by our own misconduct: to die is the fate of man; but to die with lingering anguish is generally his folly."

[7] The Correspondence may be seen at length in the Gentleman's Magazine, Feb. 1786.

1782. Ætat. 73. The following letters require no extracts from mine to introduce them.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"THE earnestness and tenderness of your letter is such, that I cannot think myself shewing it more respect than it claims by sitting down to answer it the day on which I received it.

"This year has afflicted me with a very irksome and severe disorder. My respiration has been much impeded, and much blood has been taken away. I am now harassed by a catarrhous cough, from which my purpose is to seek relief by change of air; and I am, therefore, preparing to go to Oxford.

"Whether I did right in dissuading you from coming to London this spring, I will not determine. You have not lost much by missing my company; I have scarcely been well for a single week. I might have received comfort from your kindness; but you would have seen me afflicted, and, perhaps, found me peevish. Whatever might have been your pleasure or mine, I know not how I could have honestly advised you to come hither with borrowed money. Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience; you will find it a calamity. Poverty takes away so many means of doing good, and produces so much inability to resist evil, both natural and moral, that it is by all virtuous means to be avoided. Consider a man whose fortune is very narrow; whatever be his rank by birth, or whatever his reputation by intellectual excellence, what can he do? or what evil can he prevent? That he cannot help the needy is evident; he has nothing to spare. But, perhaps,

his advice or admonition may be useful. His poverty will destroy his influence: many more can find that he is poor, than that he is wise; and few will reverence the understanding that is of so little advantage to its owner. I say nothing of the personal wretchedness of a debtor, which, however, has passed into a proverb. Of riches it is not necessary to write the praise. Let it, however, be remembered, that he who has money to spare, has it always in his power to benefit others; and of such power a good man must always be desirous.

"I am pleased with your account of Easter.[8] We shall meet, I hope in Autumn, both well and both cheerful; and part each the better for the other's company.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to the young charmers.

"I am, &c.

"London, June 3, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MR. PERKINS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM much pleased that you are going a very long journey, which may by proper conduct restore your health and prolong your life.

"Observe these rules:

"1. Turn all care out of your head as soon as you mount the chaise.

"2. Do not think about frugality; your health is worth more than it can cost.

[8] Which I celebrated in the Church-of-England chapel at Edinburgh, founded by Lord Chief Baron Smith, of respectable and pious memory.

1782. Ætat. 73. "3. Do not continue any day's journey to fatigue.

"4. Take now and then a day's rest.

"5. Get a smart sea-sickness, if you can.

"6. Cast away all anxiety, and keep your mind easy.

"This last direction is the principal; with an unquiet mind, neither exercise, nor diet, nor physick, can be of much use.

"I wish you, dear Sir, a prosperous journey, and a happy recovery. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate, humble servant,

"July 28, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"BEING uncertain whether I should have any call this autumn into the country, I did not immediately answer your kind letter. I have no call; but if you desire to meet me at Ashbourne, I believe I can come thither; if you had rather come to London, I can stay at Streatham: take your choice.

"This year has been very heavy. From the middle of January to the middle of June I was battered by one disorder after another! I am now very much recovered, and hope still to be better. What happiness it is that Mrs. Boswell has escaped.

"My 'Lives' are reprinting, and I have forgotten the authour of Gray's character:[9] write immediately, and it may be perhaps yet inserted.

"Of London or Ashbourne you have your free

[9] The Reverend Mr. Temple: Vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall

choice; at any place I shall be glad to see you. I am, dear Sir, 1782. Ætat. 73.

Yours, &c.

"August 24, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On the 30th of August, I informed him that my honoured father had died that morning; a complaint under which he had long laboured, having suddenly come to a crisis, while I was upon a visit at the seat of Sir Charles Preston, from whence I had hastened the day before, upon receiving a letter by express.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE struggled through this year with so much infirmity of body, and such strong impressions of the fragility of life, that death, whenever it appears, fills me with melancholy; and I cannot hear without emotion, of the removal of any one, whom I have known, into another state.

"Your father's death had every circumstance that could enable you to bear it; it was at a mature age, and it was expected; and as his general life had been pious, his thoughts had doubtless for many years past been turned upon eternity. That you did not find him sensible must doubtless grieve you; his disposition towards you was undoubtedly that of a kind, though not of a fond father. Kindness, at least actual, is in our power, but fondness is not; and if by negligence or imprudence you had extinguished his fondness, he could not at will rekindle it. Nothing then remained between you but mutual forgiveness of each other's faults, and mutual desire of each other's happiness.

1782. Ætat. 73. "I shall long to know his final disposition of his fortune.

"You, dear Sir, have now a new station, and have therefore new cares, and new employments. Life, as Cowley seems to say, ought to resemble a well-ordered poem; of which one rule generally received is, that the exordium should be simple, and should promise little. Begin your new course of life with the least shew, and the least expence possible; you may at pleasure encrease both, but you cannot easily diminish them. Do not think your estate your own, while any man can call upon you for money which you cannot pay; therefore, begin with timorous parsimony. Let it be your first care not to be in any man's debt.

"When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the psesent life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct, and maxims of prudence, which one generation of men has transmitted to another; but upon a closer view, when it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded by embarrassment and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue, it grows manifest that the boundless importance of the next life enforces some attention to the interest of this.

"Be kind to the old servants, and secure the kindness of the agents and factors; do not disgust them by asperity, or unwelcome gaiety, or apparent suspicion. From them you must learn the real state of your affairs, the characters of your tenants, and the value of your lands.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell; I think her expectations from air and exercise are the best

that she can form. I hope she will live long and happily. 1782. Ætat. 73.

"I forgot whether I told you that Rasay has been here; we dined cheerfully together. I entertained lately a young gentleman from Corrichatachin.

"I received your letters only this morning. I am, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

"London, Sept. 7, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

In answer to my next letter, I received one from him, dissuading me from hastening to him as I had proposed; what is proper for publication is the following paragraph, equally just and tender:

"One expence, however, I would not have you to spare; let nothing be omitted that can preserve Mrs. Boswell, though it should be necessary to transplant her for a time into a softer climate. She is the prop and stay of your life. How much must your children suffer by losing her."

My wife was now so much convinced of his sincere frendship for me, and regard for her, that, without any suggestion on my part, she wrote him a very polite and grateful letter.

"DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. BOSWELL.

"DEAR LADY,

"I HAVE not often received so much pleasure as from your invitation to Auchinleck. The journey thither and back is, indeed, too great for the latter part of the year; but if my health were fully recovered, I would suffer no little heat and cold, nor a wet or a rough road to keep me from you. I am, indeed, not without hope of seeing Auchinleck again;

1782. Ætat. 73. but to make it a pleasant place I must see its lady well, and brisk, and airy. For my sake, therefore, among many greater reasons, take care, dear Madam, of your health, spare no expence, and want no attendance that can procure ease, or preserve it. Be very careful to keep your mind quiet; and do not think it too much to give an account of your recovery to Madam,

Your's, &c.

"London, Sept. 7, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"HAVING passed almost this whole year in a succession of disorders, I went in October to Brighthelmstone, whither I came in a state of so much weakness, that I rested four times in walking between the inn and the lodging. By physick and abstinence I grew better, and am now reasonably easy, though at a great distance from health. I am afraid, however, that health begins, after seventy, and long before, to have a meaning different from that which it had at thirty. But it is culpable to murmur at the established order of the creation, as it is vain to oppose it, he that lives, must grow old; and he that would rather grow old than die, has GOD to thank for the infirmities of old age,

"At your long silence I am rather angry. You do not, since now you are the head of your house, think it worth your while to try whether you or your friend can live longer without writing, nor suspect that after so many years of friendship, that when I do not write to you, I forget you. Put all such useless jealousies out of your head, and disdain to regu-

late your own practice by the practice of another, or by any other principle than the desire of doing right. 1782. Ætat. 73.

"Your œconomy, I suppose, begins now to be settled; your expences are adjusted to your revenue, and all your people in their proper places. Resolve not to be poor: whatever you have, spend less. Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable, and others extremely difficult.

"Let me know the history of your life, since your accession to your estate. How many houses, how many cows, how much land in your own hand, and what bargains you make with your tenants.

* * * * * *

"Of my 'Lives of the Poets,' they have printed a new edition in octavo, I hear, of three thousand. Did I give a set to Lord Hailes? If I did not, I will do it out of these. What did you make of all your copy?

"Mrs. Thrale and the three Misses are now for the winter, in Argyll-street. Sir Joshua Reynolds has been out of order, but is well again; and I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"London, Dec. 7, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"DEAR SIR, "Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1782.

"I WAS made happy by your kind letter, which gave us the agreeable hopes of seeing you in Scotland again.

"I am much flattered by the concern you are pleased to take in my recovery. I am better, and hope to have it in my power to convince you by my

1782. Ætat. 73. attention, of how much consequence I esteem your health to the world and to myself. I remain, Sir, with grateful respect,

"Your obliged and obedient servant,
"MARGARET BOSWELL."

The death of Mr. Thrale had made a very material alteration with respect to Johnson's reception in that family. The manly authority of the husband no longer curbed the lively exuberance of the lady; and as her vanity had been fully gratified, by having the Colossus of Literature attached to her for many years, she gradually became less assiduous to please him. Whether her attachment to him was already divided by another object, I am unable to ascertain; but it is plain that Johnson's penetration was alive to her neglect or forced attention; for on the 6th of October this year, we find him making a "parting use of the library" at Streatham, and pronouncing a prayer, which he composed on leaving Mr. Thrale's family."[1]

"Almighty GOD, Father of all mercy, help me by thy grace, that I may, with humble and sincere thankfulness, remember the comforts and conveniencies which I have enjoyed at this place; and that I may resign them with holy submission, equally trusting in thy protection when Thou givest, and when thou Takest away. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, have mercy upon me.

"To thy fatherly protection, O LORD, I commend this family. Bless, guide, and defend them, that they may so pass through this world, as finally to en-

[1] Prayers and Meditations, p. 214.

joy in thy presence everlasting happiness, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake. Amen." 1782. Ætat. 73.

One cannot read this prayer, without some emotions not very favourable to the lady whose conduct occasioned it.

In one of his memorandum-books I find "Sunday, went to church at Streatham. *Templo valedixi cum osculo.*"

He met Mr. Philip Metcalfe often at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and other places, and was a good deal with him at Brighthelmstone this autumn, being pleased at once with his excellent table and animated conversation. Mr. Metcalfe shewed him great respect, and sent him a note that he might have the use of his carriage whenever he pleased. Johnson (3d October, 1782) returned this polite answer:— "Mr. Johnson is very much obliged by the kind offer of the carriage, but he has no desire of using Mr. Metcalfe's carriage, except when he can have the pleasure of Mr. Metcalfe's company." Mr. Metcalfe could not but he highly pleased that his company was thus valued by Johnson, and he frequently attended him in airings. They also went together to Chichester, and they visited Petworth, and Cowdry, the venerable seat of the Lords Montacute.[2] "Sir, (said Johnson,) I should like to stay here four-and-twenty hours. We see here how our ancestors lived."

That his curiosity was still unabated, appears from two letters to Mr. John Nichols, of the 10th and 20th of October this year. In one he says, "I have looked into your 'Anecdotes,' and you will

[2] [This venerable mansion has since been totally destroyed by fire. M.]

1782. Ætat. 73. hardly thank a lover of literary history for telling you, that he has been much informed and gratified. I wish you would add your own discoveries and intelligence to those of Dr. Rawlinson, and undertake the Supplement to Wood. Think of it." In the other, "I wish Sir, you could obtain some fuller information of Jortin, Markland, and Thirlby. They were three contemporaries of great eminence."

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNODLS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HEARD yesterday of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I had heard of it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I sincerely wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends; but I hope you will still live long, for the honour of the nation: and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence, is still reserved for, dear Sir, your most affectionate, &c.

"Brighthelmstone, Nov. 14, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

The Reverend Mr. Wilson having dedicated to him his "Archæological Dictionary," that mark of respect was thus acknowledged:

"TO THE REVEREND MR. WILSON, CLITHEROE, LANCASHIRE.

"REVEREND SIR,

"THAT I have long omitted to return you thanks for the honour conferred upon me by your

Dedication, I entreat you with great earnestness not to consider as more faulty than it is. A very importunate and oppressive disorder has for some time debarred me from the pleasures, and obstructed me in the duties of life. The esteem and kindness of wise and good men is one of the last pleasures which I can be content to lose; and gratitude to those from whom this pleasure is received, is a duty of which I hope never to be reproached with the final neglect. I therefore now return you thanks for the notice which I have received from you, and which I consider as giving to my name not only more bulk, but more weight; not only as extending its superficies, but as increasing its value. Your book was evidently wanted, and will, I hope, find its way into the school, to which, however, I do not mean to confine it; for no man has so much skill in antient rites and practices as not to want it. As I suppose myself to owe part of your kindness to my excellent friend, Dr. Patten, he has likewise a just claim to my acknowledgement, which I hope you, Sir, will transmit. There will soon appear a new edition of my Poetical Biography; if you will accept of a copy to keep me in your mind, be pleased to let me know how it may be conveniently conveyed to you. This present is small, but it is given with good will by, Reverend Sir, 1782. Ætat. 73.

"Your most, &c.

"December 31, 1782. "SAM. JOHNSON."

IN 1783, he was more severely afflicted than ever, as will appear in the course of his correspondence; but still the same ardour for literature, the same constant piety, the same kindness for his friends, and the 1783. Ætat. 74.

1783. same vivacity, both in conversation and writing, distinguished him.
Ætat. 74.

Having given Dr. Johnson a full account of what I was doing at Auchinleck, and particularly mentioned what I knew would please him,—my having brought an old man of eighty-eight from a lonely cottage to a comfortable habitation within my enclosures, where he had good neighbours near to him,—I received an answer in February, of which I extract what follows:

"I am delighted with your account of your activity at Auchinleck, and wish the old gentleman, whom you have so kindly removed, may live long to promote your prosperity by his prayers. You have now a new character and new duties; think on them and practise them.

"Make an impartial estimate of your revenue, and whatever it is, live upon less. Resolve never to be poor. Frugality is not only the basis of quiet, but of beneficence. No man can help others that wants help himself; we must have enough before we have to spare.

"I am glad to find that Mrs. Boswell grows well; and hope that to keep her well, no care nor caution will be omitted. May you long live happily together.

"When you come hither, pray bring with you Baxter's Anacreon. I cannot get that edition in London."[3]

On Friday, March 21, having arrived in London the night before, I was glad to find him at Mrs. Thrale's house, in Argyll-street, appearances of friend-

[3] [Dr. Johnson should seem not to have sought diligently for Baxter's Anacreon, for there are two editions of that book, and they are frequently found in the London Sale-Catalogues. M.]

ship between them being still kept up. I was shewn 1783.
into his room, and after the first salutation he said, Ætat. 74.
"I am glad you are come: I am very ill." He looked pale, and was distressed with a difficulty of breathing: but after the common enquiries he assumed his usual strong animated style of conversation. Seeing me now for the first time as a *Laird*, or proprietor of land, he began thus: "Sir, the superiority of a country-gentleman over the people upon his estate is very agreeable: and he who says he does not feel it to be agreeable, lies; for it must be agreeable to have a casual superiority over those who are by nature equal with us." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, we see great proprietors of land who prefer living in London." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the pleasure of living in London, the intellectual superiority that is enjoyed there, may counterbalance the other. Besides, Sir, a man may prefer the state of the country-gentleman upon the whole, and yet there may never be a moment when he is willing to make the change, to quit London for it." He said, "It is better to have five *per cent* out of land, than out of money, because it is more secure; but the readiness of transfer, and promptness of interest, make many people rather choose the funds. Nay, there is another disadvantage belonging to land, compared with money. man is not so much afraid of being a hard creditor, as of being a hard landlord." BOSWELL. "Because there is a sort of kindly connection between a landlord and his tenants." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; many landlords with us never see their tenants. It is because if a landlord drives away his tenants, he may not get others; whereas the demand for money is so great, it may always be lent."

1783. Ætat. 74. He talked with regret and indignation of the factious opposition to Government at this time, and imputed it in a great measure to the Revolution. "Sir, (said he, in a low voice, having come nearer to me, while his old prejudices seemed to be fomenting in his mind,) this Hanoverian family is *isolée* here. They have no friends. Now the Stuarts had friends who stuck by them so late as 1745. When the right of the King is not reverenced, there will not be reverence for those appointed by the King."

His observation that the present royal family has no friends, has been too much justified by the very ungrateful behaviour of many who were under great obligations to his Majesty; at the same time there are honourable exceptions; and the very next year after this conversation, and ever since, the King has had as extensive and generous support as ever was given to any monarch, and has had the satisfaction of knowing that he was more and more endeared to his people.

He repeated to me his verses on Mr. Levett, with an emotion which gave them full effect; and then he was pleased to say, "You must be as much with me as you can. You have done me good. You cannot think how much betterI am, since you came in."

He sent a message to acquaint Mrs. Thrale that I was arrived. I had not seen her since her husband's death. She soon appeared, and favoured me with an invitation to stay to dinner, which I accepted. There was no other company but herself and three of her daughters, Dr. Johnson, and I. She too said, she was very glad I was come, for she was going to Bath, and should have been sorry to leave Dr. Johnson before I came. This seemed to be attentive and

kind; and I who had not been informed of any change, imagined all to be as well as formerly. He was little inclined to talk at dinner, and went to sleep after it; but when he joined us in the 'drawing-room, he seemed revived, and was again himself.

Talking of conversation, he said, "There must, in the first place, be knowledge, there must be materials;—in the second place, there must be a command of words;—in the third place, there must be imagination, to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in;—and in the fourth place, there must be presence of mind, and a resolution that is not to be overcome by failures; this last is an essential requisite; for want of it many people do not excel in conversation. Now *I* want it; I throw up the game upon losing a trick." I wondered to hear him talk thus of himself, and said, "I don't know, Sir, how this may be; but I am sure you beat other people's cards out of their hands." I doubt whether he heard this remark. While we went on talking triumphantly, I was fixed in admiration, and said to Mrs. Thrale, "O, for short-hand to take this down!"—"You'll carry it all in your head, (said she;) a long head is as good as short-hand."

It has been observed and wondered at, that Mr. Charles Fox never talked with any freedom in the presence of Dr. Johnson; though it is well known, and I myself can witness, that his conversation is various, fluent, and exceedingly agreeable. Johnson's own experience, however, of that gentleman's reserve was a sufficient reason for his going on thus: "Fox never talks in private company; not from any determination not to talk, but because he has not the first motion. A man who is used to the applause of

1783. Ætat. 74. the House of Commons, has no wish for that of a private company. A man accustomed to throw for a thousand pounds, if set down to throw for sixpence, would not be at the pains to count his dice. Burke's talk is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full."

He thus curiously characterised one of our old acquaintance: "******** is a good man, Sir; but he is a vain man and a liar. He, however, only tells lies of vanity; of victories, for instance, in conversation, which never happened." This alluded to a story which I had repeated from that gentleman, to entertain Johnson with its wild bravado: "This Johnson, Sir, (said he,) whom you are all afraid of, will shrink, if you come close to him in argument, and roar as loud as he. He once maintained the paradox, that there is no beauty but in utility. 'Sir, (said I,) what say you to the peacock's tail, which is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, but would have as much utility if its feathers were all of one colour. He *felt* what I thus produced, and had recourse to his usual expedient, ridicule; exclaiming, 'A peacock has a tail, and a fox has a tail;' and then he burst out into a laugh.—'Well, Sir, (said I, with a strong voice, looking him full in the face,) you have unkennelled your fox; pursue him if you dare.' He had not a word to say, Sir"—Johnson, told me, that this was fiction from beginning to end.[4]

[4] Were I to insert all the stories which have been told of contests boldly maintained with him, imaginary victories obtained over him, of reducing him to silence, and of making him own that his antagonist had the better of him in argument, my volumes would

After musing for some time, he said, "I wonder how I should have any enemies; for I do harm to nobody."[5] BOSWELL. "In the first place, Sir, you will be pleased to recollect, that you set out with attacking the Scotch; so you got a whole nation for your enemies." JOHNSON. "Why, I own, that by my definition of *oats* I meant to vex them." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the Scotch." JOHNSON. "I cannot, Sir." BOSWELL. "Old Mr. Sheridan says, it was because they sold Charles the First." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, old Mr. Sheridan has found out a very good reason." 1783. Ætat. 74.

Surely the most obstinate and sulky rationality, the most determined aversion to this great and good man, must be cured, when he is seen thus playing with one of his prejudices, of which he candidly admitted that he could not tell the reason. It was, however, probably owing to his having had in his view the worst part of the Scottish nation, the needy adven-

swell to an immoderate size. One instance, I find, has circulated both in conversation and in print; that when he would not allow the Scotch writers to have merit, the late Dr. Rose, of Chiswick, asserted, that he could name one Scotch writer, whom Dr. Johnson himself would allow to have written better than any man of the age; and upon Johnson's asking who it was, answered, "Lord Bute, when he signed the warrant for your pension." Upon which, Johnson, struck with the repartee, acknowledged that this *was* true. When I mentioned it to Johnson, "Sir, (said he,) if Rose said this, I never heard it."

[5] This reflection was very natural in a man of a good heart, who was not conscious of any ill-will to mankind, though the sharp sayings which were sometimes produced by his discrimination and vivacity, which he perhaps did not recollect, were, I am afraid, too often remembered with resentment.

1783. Ætat. 74. turers, many of whom he thought were advanced above their merits, by means which he did not approve. Had he in his early life been in Scotland, and seen the worthy, sensible, independent gentlemen, who live rationally and hospitably at home, he never could have entertained such unfavourable and unjust notions of his fellow-subjects. And accordingly we find, that when he did visit Scotland, in the latter period of his life, he was fully sensible of all that it deserved, as I have already pointed out, when speaking of his "Journey to the Western Islands."

Next day, Saturday, March 22, I found him still at Mrs. Thrale's, but he told me that he was to go to his own house in the afternoon. He was better, but I perceived he was but an unruly patient, for Sir Lucas Pepys, who visited him, while I was with him said, "If you were *tractable*, Sir, I should prescribe for you."

I related to him a remark which a respectable friend had made to me, upon the then state of Government, when those who had been long in opposition had attained to power, as it was supposed, against the inclination of the Sovereign. "You need not be uneasy (said this gentleman) about the King. He laughs at them all; he plays them one against another." JOHNSON. "Don't think so, Sir. The King is as much oppressed as a man can be. If he plays them one against another, he *wins* nothing."

I had paid a visit to General Oglethorpe in the morning, and was told by him that Dr. Johnson saw company on Saturday evenings, and he would meet me at Johnson's that night. When I mentioned this to Johnson, not doubting that it would please

him, as he had a great value for Oglethorpe, the fretfulness of his disease unexpectedly shewed itself; his anger suddenly kindled, and he said, with vehemence, "Did not you tell him not to come? Am I to be *hunted* in this manner?" I satisfied him that I could not divine that the visit would not be convenient, and that I certainly could not take it upon me of my own accord to forbid the General. 1783. Ætat. 74.

I found Dr. Johnson in the evening in Mrs. Williams's room, at tea and coffee with her and Mrs. Desmoulins, who were also both ill; it was a sad scene, and he was not in a very good humour. He said of a performance that had lately come out, "Sir, if you should search all the madhouses in England, you would not find ten men who would write so, and think it sense."

I was glad when General Oglethorpe's arrival was announced, and we left the ladies. Dr. Johnson attended him in the parlour, and was as courteous as ever. The General said, he was busy reading the writers of the middle age. Johnson said they were very curious. OGLETHORPE. "The House of Commons has usurped the power of the nation's money, and used it tyrannically. Government is now carried on by corrupt influence, instead of the inherent right in the King." JOHNSON. "Sir, the want of inherent right in the King occasions all this disturbance. What we did at the Revolution was necessary: but it broke our constitution."[o] OGLETHORPE. "My father did not think it necessary."

[o] I have, in my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," fully expressed my sentiments upon this subject. The Revolution was *necessary*, but not a subject for *glory*; because it for a long time

1783. Ætat. 74.

On Sunday, March 23, I breakfasted with Dr. Johnson, who seemed much relieved, having taken opium the night before. He however protested against it, as a remedy that should be given with the utmost reluctance, and only in extreme necessity. I mentioned how commonly it was used in Turkey, and that therefore it could not be so pernicious as he apprehended. He grew warm, and said, "Turks take opium, and Christians take opium; but Russel, in his account of Aleppo, tells us, that it is as disgraceful in Turkey to take too much opium, as it is with us to get drunk. Sir, it is amazing how things are exaggerated. A gentleman was lately telling in a company where I was present, that in France as soon as a man of fashion marries, he takes an opera girl into keeping; and this he mentioned as a general custom. 'Pray, Sir, (said I,) how many opera girls may there be?" He answered, "About fourscore.' Well then, Sir, (said I,) you see there can be no more than fourscore men of fashion who can do this."

Mrs. Desmoulins made tea; and she and I talked before him upon a topick which he had once borne patiently from me when we were by ourselves,—his not complaining of the world, because he was not called to some great office, nor had attained to great wealth. He flew into a violent passion, I confess with some justice, and commanded us to have done, "Nobody, (said he) has a right to talk in this manner, to bring before a man his own character, and the

blasted the generous feelings of *Loyalty*. And now, when by the benignant effect of time the present Royal Family are established in our *affections*, how unwise is it to revive by celebrations the memory of a shock, which it would surely have been better that our constitution had not required.

events of his life, when he does not choose it should be done. I never have sought the world; the world was not to seek me. It is rather wonderful that so much has been done for me. All the complaints which are made of the world are unjust. I never knew a man of merit neglected: it was generally by his own fault that he failed of success. A man may hide his head in a hole: he may go into the country, and publish a book now and then, which nobody reads, and then complain he is neglected. There is no reason why any person should exert himself for a man who has written a good book: he has not written it for any individual. I may as well make a present to the postman who brings me a letter. When patronage was limited, an authour expected to find a Mæcenas, and complained if he did not find one. Why should he complain? This Mæcenas has others as good as he, or others who have got the start of him." Boswell. "But surely, Sir, you will allow that there are men of merit at the bar, who never get practice." Johnson. "Sir, you are sure that practice is got from an opinion that the person employed deserves it best; so that if a man of merit at the bar does not get practice, it is from errour, not from injustice. He is not neglected. A horse that is brought to market may not be bought, though he is a very good horse: but that is from ignorance, not from intention." 1783. Ætat. 74.

There was in this discourse much novelty, ingenuity, and discrimination, such as is seldom to be found. Yet I cannot help thinking that men of merit, who have no success in life, may be forgiven for *lamenting*, if they are not allowed to *complain*. They may consider it as *hard* that their merit should not have its suitable distinction. Though there is

1783. Ætat. 74. no intentional injustice towards them on the part of the world, their merit not having been perceived, they may yet repine against *fortune*, or *fate*, or by whatever name they choose to call the supposed mythological power of *Destiny*. It has, however, occurred to me, as a consolatory thought, that men of merit should consider thus:—How much harder would it be, if the same persons had both all the merit and all the prosperity. Would not this be a miserable distribution for the poor dunces? Would men of merit exchange their intellectual superiority, and the enjoyments arising from it, for external distinction and the pleasures of wealth? If they would not, let them not envy others, who are poor where they are rich, a compensation which is made to them. Let them look inwards and be satisfied; recollecting with conscious pride what Virgil finely says of the *Corycius Senex*, and which I have, in another place,[7] with truth and sincerity applied to Mr. Burke:

"*Regum æquabat opes animis.*"

On the subject of the right employment of wealth, Johnson observed, "A man cannot make a bad use of his money, so far as regards Society, if he do not hoard it; for if he either spends it or lends it out, Society has the benefit. It is in general better to spend money than to give it away; for industry is more promoted by spending money than by giving it away. A man who spends his money is sure he is doing good with it: he is not so sure when he gives it away. A man who spends ten thousand a year

[7] Letter to the People of Scotland against the Attempt to diminish the Number of the Lords of Session, 1785.

will do more good than a man who spends two thousand and gives away eight." 1783. Ætat. 74.

In the evening I came to him again. He was somewhat fretful from his illness. A gentleman asked him whether he had been abroad to-day. "Don't talk so childishly, (said he.) You may as well ask if I hanged myself to-day." I mentioned politicks. JOHNSON. "Sir, I'd as soon have a man to break my bones as talk to me of public affairs, internal or external. I have lived to see things all as bad as they can be."

Having mentioned his friend, the second Lord Southwell, he said, "Lord Southwell was the highest-bred man without insolence, that I ever was in company with; the most *qualitied* I ever saw. Lord Orrery was not dignified; Lord Chesterfield was, but he was insolent. Lord ********* is a man of coarse manners, but a man of abilities and information. I don't say he is a man I would set at the head of a nation, though perhaps he may be as good as the next Prime Minister that comes; but he is a man to be at the head of a Club;—I don't say *our* CLUB;—for there's no such Club." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, was he not once a factious man?" JOHNSON. "O yes, Sir; as factious a fellow as could be found: one who was for sinking us all into the mob." BOSWELL. "How then, Sir, did he get into favour with the King?" JOHNSON. "Because, Sir, I suppose he promised the King to do whatever the King pleased."

He said, "Goldsmith's blundering speech to Lord Shelburne, which has been so often mentioned, and which he really did make to him, was only a blunder in emphasis:—'I wonder they should cal

1783. Ætat. 74. your Lordship *Malagrida*, for Malagrida was a very good man;'—meant, I wonder they should use *Malagrida* as a term of reproach."

Soon after this time I had an opportunity of seeing, by means of one of his friends, a proof that his talents, as well as his obliging service to authours, were ready as ever. He had revised "The Village," an admirable poem, by the Reverend Mr. Crabbe. Its sentiments as to the false notions of rustick happiness and rustick virtue, were quite congenial with his own; and he had taken the trouble not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript.[8]

[8] I shall give an instance, marking the original by Roman, and Johnson's substitution in Italick characters:

"In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
"Tityrus, the pride of Mantuan swains, might sing:
"But charmed by him, or smitten with his views,
"Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse?
"From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
"Where Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way?"

"*On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,*
"*If Tityrus found the golden age again,*
"*Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,*
"*Mechanick echoes of the Mantuan song?*
"From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
"*Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?*"

Here we find Johnson's poetical and critical powers undiminished. I must, however, observe, that the aids he gave to this poem, as to "The Traveller" and "Deserted Village" of Goldsmith, were so small as by no means to impair the distinguishing merit of the authour.

On Sunday, March 30, I found him at home in the evening, and had the pleasure to meet with Dr. Brocklesby, whose reading, and knowledge of life, and good spirits, supply him with a never-failing source of conversation. He mentioned a respectable gentleman, who became extremely penurious near the close of his life. Johnson said there must have been a degree of madness about him. "Not at all, Sir, (said Dr. Brocklesby,) his judgement was entire." Unluckily, however, he mentioned that although he had a fortune of twenty-seven thousand pounds, he denied himself many comforts, from an apprehension that he could not afford them. "Nay, Sir, (cried Johnson,) when the judgement is so disturbed that a man cannot count, that is pretty well." 1783. Ætat. 74.

I shall here insert a few of Johnson's sayings, without the formality of dates, as they have no reference to any particular time or place.

"The more a man extends and varies his acquaintance the better." This, however, was meant with a just restriction; for, he on another occasion said to me, "Sir, a man may be so much of every thing, that he is nothing of any thing."

"Raising the wages of day-labourers is wrong; for it does not make them live better, but only makes them idler, and idleness is a very bad thing for human nature."

"It is a very good custom to keep a journal for a man's own use; he may write upon a card a day all that is necessary to be written, after he has had experience of life. At first there is a great deal to be written, because there is a great deal of novelty; but when once a man has settled his opinions, there is seldom much to be set down."

1783. Ætat. 74. "There is nothing wonderful in the Journal[9] which we see Swift kept in London, for it contains slight topicks, and it might soon be written."

I praised the accuracy of an account-book of a lady whom I mentioned. JOHNSON. "Keeping accounts, Sir, is of no use when a man is spending his own money, and has nobody to whom he is to account. You won't eat less beef to day, because you have written down what it cost yesterday." I mentioned another lady who thought as he did, so that her husband could not get her to keep an account of the expence of the family, as she thought it enough that she never exceeded the sum allowed her. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is fit she should keep an account, because her husband wishes it; but I do not see its use." I maintained that keeping an account has this advantage, that it satisfies a man that his money has not been lost or stolen, which he might sometimes be apt to imagine, were there no written state of his expence; and besides, a calculation of economy so as not to

[9] [In his Life of Swift, he thus speaks of this Journal:

"In the midst of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with ministers, and quarrels with his servant, and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befel him was interesting, and no account could be too minute. Whether these diurnal trifles were properly exposed to eyes which had never received any pleasure from the Dean, may be reasonably doubted: they have, however, some odd attractions: the reader finding frequent mention of names which he has been used to consider as important, goes on in hope of information; and as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is disappointed, he can hardly complain."

It may be added, that the reader not only hopes to find, but does find, in this very entertaining Journal, much curious information, respecting persons and things, which he will in vain seek for in other books of the same period. M.]

exceed one's income, cannot be made without a view of the different articles in figures, that one may see how to retrench in some particulars less necessary than others. This he did not attempt to answer. 1783. Ætat. 74.

Talking of an acquaintance of ours, whose narratives, which abounded in curious and interesting topicks, were unhappily found to be very fabulous; I mentioned Lord Mansfield's having said to me, "Suppose we believe one *half* of what he tells." JOHNSON. "Ay; but we don't know *which* half to believe. By his lying we lose not only our reverence for him, but all comfort in his conversation." BOSWELL. "May we not take it as amusing fiction?" JOHNSON. "Sir, the misfortune is, that you will insensibly believe as much of it as you incline to believe."

It is remarkable, that notwithstanding their congeniality in politicks, he never was acquainted with a late eminent noble judge, whom I have heard speak of him as a writer, with great respect. Johnson, I know not upon what degree of investigation, entertained no exalted opinion of his Lordship's intellectual character. Talking of him to me one day, he said, "It is wonderful, Sir, with how little real superiority of mind men can make an eminent figure in publick life." He expressed himself to the same purpose concerning another law-lord, who, it seems, once took a fancy to associate with the wits of London; but with so little success, that Foote said, "What can he mean by coming among us? He is not only dull himself, but the cause of dullness in others." Trying him by the test of his colloquial powers, Johnson had found him very defective. He once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "This man now

1783. Ætat. 74. has been ten years about town, and has made nothing of it;" meaning as a companion.[1] He said to me, "I never heard any thing from him in company that was at all striking; and depend upon it, Sir, it is when you come close to a man in conversation, that you discover what his real abilities are: to make a speech in a publick assembly is a knack. Now I honour Thurlow, Sir; Thurlow is a fine fellow; he fairly puts his mind to yours."

After repeating to him some of his pointed, lively sayings, I said, "It is a pity, Sir, you don't always remember your own good things, that you may have a laugh when you will." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is better that I forget them, that I may be reminded of them, and have a laugh on their being brought to my recollection."

When I recalled to him his having said as we sailed up Lochlomond, "That if he wore any thing fine, it should be *very* fine;" I observed that all his thoughts were upon a great scale. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, every man will have as fine a thing as he can get; as large a diamond for his ring." BOSWELL. "Pardon me, Sir: a man of a narrow mind will not think of it, a slight trinket will satisfy him:

'*Nec sufferre queat majoris pondera gemmæ.*'"

I told him I should send him some "Essays"

[1] Knowing as well as I do what precision and elegance of oratory his Lordship can display, I cannot but suspect that his unfavourable appearance in a social circle, which drew such animadversions upon him, must be owing to a cold affectation of consequence, from being reserved and stiff. If it be so, and he might be an agreeable man if he would, we cannot be sorry that he misses his aim.

which I had written,[2] which I hoped he would be so good as to read, and pick out the good ones. 1783. Ætat. 74.
JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, send me only the good ones; don't make *me* pick them."

I heard him once say, "Though the proverb '*Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*,' does not always prove true, we may be certain of the converse of it, *Nullum numen adest, si sit imprudentia*."

Once, when Mr. Seward was going to Bath, and asked his commands, he said, "Tell Dr. Harrington that I wish he would publish another volume of the '*Nugæ antiquæ*;'[3] it is a very pretty book."[4] Mr. Seward seconded this wish, and recommended to Dr. Harrington to dedicate it to Johnson, and take for his motto, what Catullus says to Cornelius Nepos:

> " ——— *namque tu solebas,*
> " *Meas esse aliquid putare* NUGAS."

As a small proof of his kindliness and delicacy of feeling, the following circumstance may be mentioned: One evening when we were in the street together, and I told him I was going to sup at Mr. Beauclerk's, he said, "I'll go with you." After having walked part of the way, seeming to recollect

[2] [Under the title of "The Hypocondriack." M.]

[3] It has since appeared.

[4] [A new and greatly improved edition of this very curious collection was published by Mr. Park in 1804, in two volumes, octavo. In this edition the letters are chronologically arranged, and the account of the Bishops, which was formerly printed from a very corrupt copy, is taken from Sir John Harrington's original manuscript, which he presented to Henry, Prince of Wales, and is now in the Royal Library in the Museum. M.]

1783. Ætat. 74. something, he suddenly stopped and said, "I cannot go,—but *I do not love Beauclerk the less.*"

On the frame of his portrait, Mr. Beauclerk had inscribed,

"——— *Ingenium ingens*
"*Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.*"

After Mr. Beauclerk's death, when it became Mr. Langton's property, he made the inscription be defaced. Johnson said complacently, "It was kind in you to take it off; and then after a short pause, added, "and not unkind in him to put it on."

He said, "How few of his friends' houses would a man choose to be at, when he is sick!" He mentioned one or two. I recollect only Thrale's.

He observed, "There is a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle-aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he laid his hat, it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug up their shoulders, and say, 'His memory is going.'"

When I once talked to him of some of the sayings which every body repeats, but nobody knows where to find, such as, *Quos* Deus *vult perdere, prius dementat*; he told me that he was once offered ten guineas to point out from whence *Semel insanivimus omnes* was taken. He could not do it; but many years afterwards met with it by chance in *Johannes Baptista Mantuanus*.[5]

°[5] [The words occur, (as Mr. Bindley observes to me,) in the First Eclogue of Mantuanus, *De honesto Amore*, &c.

Id commune malum; semel insanivimus omnes.

I am very sorry that I did not take a note of an eloquent argument in which he maintained that the 1783. Ætat. 74.

With the following elucidation of the other saying—*Quos Deus* (it should rather be— *Quem Jupiter) vult perdere, prius dementat*—Mr. Boswell was furnished by Mr. Richard How, of Aspley, in Bedfordshire, as communicated to that gentleman by his friend Mr. John Pitts, late Rector of Great Brickhill, in Buckinghamshire:

"Perhaps no scrap of Latin whatever has been more quoted than this. It occasionally falls even from those who are scrupulous even to pedantry in their Latinity, and will not admit a word into their compositions, which has not the sanction of the first age. The word *demento* is of no authority, either as a verb active or neuter.— After a long search for the purpose of deciding a bet, some gentlemen of Cambridge found it among the fragments of Euripides, in what edition I do not recollect, where it is given as a translation of a Greek Iambick:

Ον Θεος θελει απολεσαι, πρωτ' αποφρεναι.

"The above scrap was found in the hand-writing of a suicide of fashion, Sir D. O. some years ago, lying on the table of the room where he had destroyed himself. The suicide was a man of classical acquirements: he left no other paper behind him."—

Another of these proverbial sayings—

Incidit in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim,

I some years ago, in a Note on a passage in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, traced to its source. It occurs (with a slight variation) in the ALEXANDREIS of Philip Gualtier, (a poet of the thirteenth century) which was printed at Lyons in 1558. Darius is the person addressed:

——— ——— Quò tendis inertem,
Rex periture, fugam? nescis, heu! perdite, nescis
Quem fugias: hostes incurris dum fugis hostem;
Incidis in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim.

The author of this line was first ascertained by Galleottus Martius, who died in 1476; as is observed in MENAGIANA, vol. III. p. 130. edit. 1762.—For an account of Philip Gualtier, see Vossius de Poet. Latin. p. 254, fol. 1697.

A line not less frequently quoted than any of the preceding, was

1783. Ætat. 74. situation of Prince of Wales was the happiest of any person's in the kingdom, even beyond that of the Sovereign. I recollect only—the enjoyment of hope,—the high superiority of rank, without the anxious cares of government,—and a great degree of power, both from natural influence wisely used, and from the sanguine expectations of those who look forward to the chance of future favour.

Sir Joshua Reynolds communicated to me the following particulars:

Johnson thought the poems published as translations from Ossian, had so little merit, that he said, "Sir, a man might write such stuff for ever, if he would *abandon* his mind to it."

He said, "A man should pass a part of his time with *the laughers*, by which means any thing ridiculous or particular about him might be presented to his view, and corrected." I observed, he must have been a bold laugher who would have ventured to tell Dr. Johnson of any of his particularities.[7]

Having observed the vain ostentatious importance of many people in quoting the authority of Dukes

suggested for enquiry, several years ago, in a Note on The Rape of Lucrece:

Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris ——:

But the author of this verse has not, I believe, been discovered. M.]

[7] I am happy, however, to mention a pleasing instance of his enduring with great gentleness to hear one of his most striking particularities pointed out:—Miss Hunter, a niece of his friend Christopher Smart, when a very young girl, struck by his extraordinary motions, said to him, "Pray, Dr. Johnson, why do you make such strange gestures?"—"From bad habit, (he replied.) Do you, my dear, take care to guard against bad habits." This I was told by the young lady's brother at Margate.

and Lords, as having been in their company, he said, he went to the other extreme, and did not mention his authority when he should have done it, had it not been that of a Duke or a Lord. 1783. Ætat. 74.

Dr. Goldsmith said once to Dr. Johnson, that he wished for some additional members to the LITERARY CLUB, to give it an agreeable variety; for (said he,) there can now be nothing new among us: we have travelled over one another's minds. Johnson seemed a little angry, and said, "Sir, you have not travelled over *my* mind, I promise you." Sir Joshua, however, thought Goldsmith right; observing, that "when people have lived a great deal together, they know what each of them will say on every subject. A new understanding, therefore, is desirable; because though it may only furnish the same sense upon a question which would have been furnished by those with whom we are accustomed to live, yet this sense will have a different colouring; and colouring is of much effect in every thing else as well as in painting."

Johnson used to say that he made it a constant rule to talk as well as he could both as to sentiment and expression, by which means, what had been originally effort became familiar and easy. The consequence of this, Sir Joshua observed, was, that his common conversation in all companies was such as to secure him universal attention, as something above the usual colloquial style was expected.

Yet, though Johnson had this habit in company, when another mode was necessary, in order to investigate truth, he could descend to a language intelligible to the meanest capacity. An instance of this was witnessed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, when they were present at an examination of a little black-

1783. Ætat. 74. guard boy, by Mr. Saunders Welch, the late Westminster Justice. Welch, who imagined that he was exalting himself in Dr. Johnson's eyes by using big words, spoke in a manner that was utterly unintelligible to the boy; Dr. Johnson perceiving it, addressed himself to the boy, and changed the pompous phraseology into colloquial language. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was much amused by this procedure, which seemed a kind of reversing of what might have been expected from the two men, took notice of it to Dr. Johnson, as they walked away by themselves. Johnson said, that it was continually the case; and that he was always obliged to *translate* the Justice's swelling diction, (smiling,) so as that his meaning might be understood by the vulgar, from whom information was to be obtained.

Sir Joshua once observed to him, that he had talked above the capacity of some people with whom they had been in company together. "No matter, Sir, (said Johnson); they consider it as a compliment to be talked to, as if they were wiser than they are. So true is this, Sir, that Baxter made it a rule in every sermon that he preached, to say something that was above the capacity of his audience."[8]

Johnson's dexterity in retort, when he seemed to be driven to an extremity by his adversary, was very remarkable. Of his power in this respect, our common friend, Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, has been pleased to furnish me with an eminent instance. However unfavourable to Scotland, he uniformly

"[8] The justness of this remark is confirmed by the following story, for which I am indebted to Lord Eliot: A country Parson, who was remarkable for quoting scraps of Latin in his sermons, having died, one of his parishioners was asked how he liked his successor; "He is a very good preacher, (was his answer,) but no *latiner*."

gave liberal praise to George Buchanan, as a writer. In a conversation concerning the literary merits of the two countries, in which Buchanan was introduced, a Scotchman, imagining that on this ground he should have an undoubted triumph over him, exclaimed, "Ah, Dr. Johnson, what would you have said of Buchanan, had he been an Englishman?"—"Why, Sir, (said Johnson, after a little pause,) I should *not* have said of Buchanan, had he been an *Englishman*, what I will now say of him as a *Scotchman*,—that he was the only man of genius his country ever produced."

And this brings to my recollection another instance of the same nature. I once reminded him that when Dr. Adam Smith was expatiating on the beauty of Glasgow, he had cut him short by saying, "Pray, Sir, have you ever seen Brentford?" and I took the liberty to add, "My dear Sir, surely that was *shocking*."—"Why, then, Sir, (he replied,) YOU have never seen Brentford."

Though his usual phrase for conversation was *talk*, yet he made a distinction; for when he once told me that he dined the day before at a friend's house, with "a very pretty company;" and I asked him if there was good conversation, he answered, "No, Sir; we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation*; there was nothing *discussed*."

Talking of the success of the Scotch in London, he imputed it in a considerable degree to their spirit of nationality. "You know, Sir, (said he,) that no Scotchman publishes a book, or has a play brought upon the stage, but there are five hundred people ready to applaud him."

He gave much praise to his friend, Dr. Burney's

1783. Ætat. 74. elegant and entertaining travels, and told Mr. Seward that he had them in his eye, when writing his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."

Such was his sensibility, and so much was he affected by pathetick poetry, that, when he was reading Dr. Beattie's "Hermit," in my presence, it brought tears into his eyes.[9]

He disapproved much of mingling real facts with fiction. On this account he censured a book entitled "Love and Madness."

Mr. Hoole told him, he was born in Moorfields, and had received part of his early instruction in Grub-street. "Sir, (said Johnson, smiling) you have been *regularly* educated." Having asked who was his instructor, and Mr. Hoole having answered, "My uncle, Sir, who was a taylor;" Johnson, recollecting himself, said, "Sir, I knew him; we called him the *metaphysical taylor*. He was of a club in Old-street, with me and George Psalmanazar, and some others: but pray, Sir, was he a good taylor?" Mr. Hoole having answered that he believed he was too mathematical, and used to draw squares and triangles on his shop-board, so that he did not excel in the cut of a coat;"—"I am sorry for it (said Johnson,) for I would have every man to be master of his own business."

In pleasant reference to himself and Mr. Hoole, as brother authours, he often said, "Let you and I, Sir, go together, and eat a beef-steak in Grub-street."

9 [The particular passage which excited this strong emotion, was, as I have heard from my father, the third stanza, "'Tis night," &c. J. B.—O.]

Sir William Chambers, that great Architect[1] whose works shew a sublimity of genius, and who is esteemed by all who know him, for his social, hospitable, and generous qualities, submitted the manuscript of his "Chinese Architecture," to Dr. Johnson's perusal. Johnson was much pleased with it, and said, "It wants no addition nor correction, but a few lines of introduction;" which he furnished, and Sir William adopted.[2]

He said to Sir William Scott, "The age is running mad after innovation; and all the business of the world is to be done in a new way; men are to be hanged in a new way; Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation." It having been argued that this was an improvement.—"No, Sir, (said he, eagerly,) it is *not* an improvement; they object, that the old method drew together a number of specta-

[1] The Honourable Horace Walpole, late Earl of Orford, thus bears testimony to this gentleman's merit as a writer: Mr. Chambers's 'Treatise on Civil Architecture,' is the most sensible book, and the most exempt from prejudices, that ever was written on that science.—Preface to "*Anecdotes of Painting in England.*"

[2] The introductory lines are these: It is difficult to avoid praising too little or too much. The boundless panegyricks which have been lavished upon the Chinese learning, policy, and arts, shew with what power novelty attracts regard, and how naturally esteem swells into admiration.

"I am far from desiring to be numbered among the exaggerators of Chinese excellence. I consider them as great, or wise, only in comparison with the nations that surround them; and have no intention to place them in competition either with the antients or with the moderns of this part of the world; yet they must be allowed to claim our notice as a distinct and very singular race of men: as the inhabitants of a region divided by its situation from all civilized countries, who have formed their own manners, and invented their own arts, without the assistance of example."

1783. Ætat. 74. ters. Sir, executions are intended to draw spectators. If they do not draw spectators, they don't answer their purpose. The old method was most satisfactory to all parties; the publick was gratified by a procession; the criminal was supported by it. Why is all this to be swept away?" I perfectly agree with Dr. Johnson upon this head, and am persuaded that executions now, the solemn procession being discontinued, have not nearly the effect which they formerly had. Magistrates both in London, and elsewhere, have, I am afraid, in this, had too much regard to their own ease.

Of Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, Johnson said to a friend,—"Hurd, Sir, is one of a set of men "who account for every thing systematically; for "instance, it has been a fashion to wear scarlet "breeches; these men would tell you, that according "to causes and effects, no other wear could at that "time have been chosen." He, however, said of him at another time to the same gentleman, "Hurd, "Sir, is a man whose acquaintance is a valuable ac-"quisition."

That learned and ingenious Prelate it is well known published at one period of his life "Moral and Political Dialogues," with a woefully whiggish cast. Afterwards, his Lordship having thought better, came to see his errour, and republished the work with a more constitutional spirit. Johnson, however, was unwilling to allow him full credit for his political conversion. I remember when his Lordship declined the honour of being Archbishop of Canterbury, Johnson said "I am glad he did not go to Lambeth; for, after all, I fear he is a Whig in his heart."

Johnson's attention to precision and clearness in expression was very remarkable. He disapproved of a parenthesis; and I believe in all his voluminous writings, not half a dozen of them will be found. He never used the phrases *the former and the latter*, having observed, that they often occasioned obscurity; he therefore contrived to construct his sentences so as not to have occasion for them, and would even rather repeat the same words, in order to avoid them. Nothing is more common than to mistake surnames, when we hear them carelessly uttered for the first time. To prevent this, he used not only to pronounce them slowly and distinctly, but to take the trouble of spelling them; a practice which I have often followed; and which I wish were general.

Such was the heat and irritability of his blood, that not only did he pare his nails to the quick; but scraped the joints of his fingers with a pen-knife, till they seemed quite red and raw.

The heterogeneous composition of human nature was remarkably exemplified in Johnson. His liberality in giving his money to persons in distress was extraordinary. Yet there lurked about him a propensity to paltry saving. One day I owned to him that "I was occasionally troubled with a fit of *narrowness*." 'Why, Sir, (said he,) so am I. *But I do not tell it.*' He has now and then borrowed a shilling of me; and when I asked him for it again, seemed to be rather out of humour. A droll little circumstance once occurred: As if he meant to reprimand my minute exactness as a creditor, he thus addressed me;— "Boswell, *lend* me sixpence—*not to be repaid.*"

This great man's attention to small things was very remarkable. As an instance of it, he one day

1783. Ætat. 74. said to me, "Sir, when you get silver in change for a guinea, look carefully at it; you may find some curious piece of coin."

Though a stern *true-born Englishman*, and fully prejudiced against all other nations, he had discernment enough to see, and candour enough to censure, the cold reserve too common among Englishmen towards strangers: "Sir, (said he,) two men of any other nation who are shewn into a room together, at a house where they are both visitors, will immediately find some conversation. But two Englishmen will probably go each to a different window, and remain in obstinate silence. Sir, we as yet do not enough understand the common rights of humanity."

Johnson was at a certain period of his life a good deal with the Earl of Shelburne, now Marquis of Lansdown, as he doubtless could not but have a due value for that nobleman's activity of mind, and uncommon acquisitions of important knowledge, however much he might disapprove of other parts of his Lordship's character, which were widely different from his own.

Morice Morgann, Esq. authour of the very ingenious "Essay on the character of Falstaff,"[3] being a particular friend of his Lordship, had once an opportunity of entertaining Johnson for a day or two at Wycombe, when its Lord was absent, and by him I have been favoured with two anecdotes.

[3] Johnson being asked his opinion of this Essay, answered, "Why, Sir, we shall have the man come forth again; and as he has proved Falstaff to be no coward, he may prove Iago to be a very good character."

One is not a little to the credit of Johnson's candour. Mr. Morgann and he had a dispute pretty late at night, in which Johnson would not give up, though he had the wrong side, and in short, both kept the field. Next morning, when they met in the breakfasting-room, Dr. Johnson accosted Mr. Morgann thus: "Sir, I have been thinking on our dispute last night—*You were in the right.*" 1783. Ætat. 74.

The other was as follows: Johnson, for sport perhaps, or from the spirit of contradiction, eagerly maintained that Derrick had merit as a writer. Mr. Morgann argued with him directly, in vain. At length he had recourse to this device. "Pray, Sir, (said he,) whether do you reckon Derrick or Smart the best poet?" Johnson at once felt himself roused; and answered, "Sir, there is no settling the point of precedency between a louse and a flea."

Once, when checking my boasting too frequently of myself in company, he said to me, "Boswell, you often vaunt so much as to provoke ridicule. You put me in mind of a man who was standing in the kitchen of an inn with his back to the fire, and thus accosted the person next him, 'Do you know, Sir, who I am?' 'No, Sir, (said the other,) I have not that advantage.' 'Sir, (said he,) I am the *great* TWALMLEY, who invented the New Floodgate Iron."[4] The Bishop of Killaloe, on my repeating the story to him, defended TWALMLEY, by observing that he was entitled to the epithet of *great*; for Virgil in his groupe of worthies in the Elysian fields—

[4] What the *great* TWALMLEY was so proud of having invented, was neither more or less than a kind of box-iron for smoothing linen.

1783. *Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi*; &c.
Ætat. 74. mentions

Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes.

He was pleased to say to me one morning when we were left alone in his study, "Boswell, I think, I am easier with you than with almost any body."

He would not allow Mr. David Hume any credit for his political principles, though similiar to his own; saying of him, "Sir, he was a Tory by chance."

His acute observation of human life made him remark, "Sir, there is nothing by which a man exasperates most people more, than by displaying a superior ability of brilliancy in conversation. They seem pleased at the time; but their envy makes them curse him at their hearts.

My readers will probably be surprised to hear that the great Dr. Johnson could amuse himself with so slight and playful a species of composition as a *Charade*. I have recovered one which he made on Dr. *Barnard*, now Lord Bishop of Killaloe;[5] who has been pleased for many years to treat me with so much intimacy and social ease, that I may presume to call him not only my Right Reverend, but my very dear Friend. I therefore with peculiar pleasure give to the world a just and elegant compliment thus paid to his Lordship by Johnson.

CHARADE.

"My *first*[6] shuts out thieves from your house or your room,
My *second*[7] expresses a Syrian perfume.

[5] [Afterwards translated to the see of Limerick. M.]
[6] Bar. [7] Nard.

"My *whole*[8] is a man in whose converse is shar'd,
"The strength of a Bar and the sweetness of Nard." 1783. Ætat. 74.

Johnson asked Richard Owen Cambridge, Esq. if he had read the Spanish translation of Sallust, said to be written by a Prince of Spain, with the assistance of his tutor, who is professedly the authour of a treatise annexed, on the Phœnician language.

Mr. Cambridge commended the work, particularly as he thought the Translator understood his authour better than is commonly the case with Translators; but said, he was disappointed in the purpose for which he borrowed the book; to see whether a Spaniard could be better furnished with inscriptions from monuments, coins, or other antiquities, which he might more probably find on a coast, so immediately opposite to Carthage, than the Antiquaries of any other countries. JOHNSON. "I am very sorry you were not gratified in your expectations." CAMBRIDGE. "The language would have been of little use, as there is no history existing in that tongue to balance the partial accounts which the Roman writers have left us." JOHNSON. "No, Sir. They have not been *partial*, they have told their own story, without shame or regard to equitable treatment of their injured enemy; they had no compunction, no feeling for a Carthaginian. Why, Sir, they would never have borne Virgil's description of Æneas's treatment of Dido, if she had not been a Carthaginian."

I gratefully acknowledge this and other communications from Mr. Cambridge, whom, if a beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, a few miles distant from London, a numerous and excellent library,

[8] Barnard.

1783. Ætat. 74. which he accurately knows and reads, a choice collection of pictures, which he understands and relishes, an easy fortune, an amiable family, an extensive circle of friends and acquaintance, distinguished by rank, fashion and genius, a literary fame, various elegant and still increasing, colloquial talents rarely to be found, and with all these means of happiness, enjoying, when well advanced in years, health and vigour of body, serenity and animation of mind, do not entitle to be addressed *fortunate senex!* I know not to whom, in any age, that expression could with propriety have been used. Long may he live to hear and to feel it![9].

Johnson's love of little children, which he discovered upon all occasions, calling them, "pretty dears," and giving them sweetmeats, was an undoubted proof of the real humanity and gentleness of his disposition.

His uncommon kindness to his servants, and serious concern, not only for their comfort in this world, but their happiness in the next, was another unquestionable evidence of what all, who were intimately acquainted with him, knew to be true.

Nor would it be just under this head, to omit the fondness which he shewed for animals which he had taken under his protection. I never shall forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat: for whom he himself used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants having that trouble should take a dislike to the poor creature. I am, unluckily one of those who have an antipathy to a cat, so that I am uneasy

[9] [Mr. Cambridge enjoyed all the blessings here enumerated for many years after this passage was written. He died at his seat near Twickenham, Sept. 17, 1802, in his eighty-sixth year. M.]

when in the room with one; and I own, I frequently suffered a good deal from the presence of this same Hodge. I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr. Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while my friend smiling and half-whistling, rubbed down his back, and pulled him by the tail; and when I observed he was a fine cat, saying "why, yes, Sir, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this;" and then as if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, adding, "but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed." 1783. Ætat. 74.

"This reminds me of the ludicrous account which he gave Mr. Langton, of the despicable state of a young gentleman of good family. "Sir, when I heard of him last, he was running about town shooting cats." And then in a sort of kindly reverie, he bethought himself of his own favourite cat, and said, "But Hodge shan't be shot: no, no, Hodge shall not be shot."

He thought Mr. Beauclerk made a shrewd and judicious remark to Mr. Langton, who, after having been for the first time in company with a well known wit about town, was warmly admiring and praising him, "See him again," said Beauclerk.

His respect for the Hierarchy, and particularly the Dignitaries of the Church, has been more than once exhibited in the course of this work. Mr. Seward saw him presented to the Archbishop of York, and described his *Bow to an* ARCH-BISHOP, as such a studied elaboration of homage, such an extension of limb, such a flexion of body, as have seldom or ever been equalled.

I cannot help mentioning with much regret, that by my own negligence I lost an opportunity of hav-

1783. Ætat. 74. ing the history of my family from its founder Thomas Boswell, in 1504, recorded and illustrated by Johnson's pen. Such was his goodness to me, that when I presumed to solicit him for so great a favour, he was pleased to say, "Let me have all the materials you can collect, and I will do it both in Latin and English; then let it be printed, and copies of it be deposited in various places for security and preservation." I can now only do the best I can to make up for this loss, keeping my great Master steadily in view. Family histories, like the *imagines majorum* of the ancients, excite to virtue; and I wish that they who really have blood, would be more careful to trace and ascertain its course. Some have affected to laugh at the history of the house of Yvery:[1] it would be well if many others would transmit their pedigrees to posterity, with the same accuracy and generous zeal, with which the Noble Lord who compiled that work has honoured and perpetuated his ancestry.

On Thursday, April 10, I introduced to him, at his house in Bolt-court, the Honourable and Reverend William Stuart,[2] son of the Earl of Bute; a gentleman truly worthy of being known to Johnson; being, with all the advantages of high birth, learning, travel, and elegant manners, an exemplary parish priest in every respect.

After some compliments on both sides, the tour which Johnson and I had made to the Hebrides was

[1] [Written by John, Earl of Egmont. M.]

[2] [At that time Vicar of Luton in Bedfordshire, where he lived for some years, and fully merited the character given of him in the text; now [1806] Lord Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland. M.]

mentioned.—JOHNSON. "I got an acquisition of more ideas by it than by any thing that I remember. I saw quite a different system of life." BOSWELL. "You would not like to make the same journey again?" JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; not the same: it is a tale told. Gravina, an Italian critick, observes, that every man desires to see that of which he has read; but no man desires to read an account of what he has seen: so much does description fall short of reality. Description only excites curiosity: seeing satisfies it. Other people may go and see the Hebrides." BOSWELL. "I should wish to go and see some country totally different from what I have been used to; such as Turkey, where religion and every thing else are different." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; there are two objects of curiosity,—the Christian world, and the Mahometan world. All the rest may be considered as barbarous." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, is the 'Turkish Spy' a genuine book?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. Mrs. Manley, in her Life, says, that her father wrote the first two volumes: and in another book, 'Dunton's Life and Errours,' we find that the rest was written by one *Sault*, at two guineas a sheet, under the direction of Dr. Midgeley."[3]

BOSWELL. "This has been a very factious reign, owing to the too great indulgence of Government."

[3] ["The Turkish Spy," was pretended to have been written originally in Arabick; from Arabick translated into Italian, and thence into English. The real authour of the work, which was in fact originally written in Italian, was I. P. Marana, a Genoese, who died at Paris in 1693.

John Dunton in his life says, that "Mr. *William Bradshaw* received from Dr. Midgeley forty shillings a sheet for writing part of the "Turkish Spy;" but I do not find that he any where mentions *Sault* as engaged in that work. M.]

1783. Ætat. 74. JOHNSON. "*I* think so, Sir. What at first was lenity, grew timidity. Yet this is reasoning *à posteriori*, and may not be just. Supposing a few had at first been punished, I believe faction would have been crushed; but it might have been said, that it was a sanguinary reign. A man cannot tell *à priori* what will be best for government to do. This reign has been very unfortunate. We have had an unsuccessful war; but that does not prove that we have been ill governed. One side or other must prevail in war, as one or other must win at play. When we beat Louis, we were not better governed; nor where the French better governed, when Louis beat us."

On Saturday, April 12, I visited him, in company with Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, whom, though a Whig, he highly valued. One of the best things he ever said was to this gentleman; who before he set out for Ireland as Secretary to Lord Northington, when Lord Lieutenant, expressed to the Sage some modest and virtuous doubts, whether he could bring himself to practise those arts which it is supposed a person in that situation has occasion to employ. "Don't be afraid, Sir, (said Johnson, with a pleasant smile,) you will soon make a very pretty rascal."

He talked to day a good deal of the wonderful extent and variety of London, and observed, that men of curious enquiry might see in it such modes of life as very few could even imagine. He in particular recommended to us to *explore Wapping*, which we resolved to do.[4]

[4] We accordingly carried our scheme into execution, in October, 1792; but whether from that uniformity which has in modern times, in a great degree, spread through every part of the metropolis, or from our want of sufficient exertion, we were disappointed.

Mr. Lowe, the painter, who was with him, was very much distressed that a large picture which he had painted was refused to be received into the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Mrs. Thrale knew Johnson's character so superficially, as to represent him as unwilling to do small acts of benevolence; and mentions, in particular, that he would hardly take the trouble to write a letter in favour of his friends. The truth, however, is, that he was remarkable, in an extraordinary degree, for what she denies to him; and, above all, for this very sort of kindness, writing letters for those to whom his solicitations might be of service. He now gave Mr. Lowe the following, of which I was diligent enough, with his permission, to take copies at the next coffee-house, while Mr. Windham was so good as to stay by me. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"SIR,

"Mr. Lowe considers himself as cut off from all credit and all hope, by the rejection of his picture from the Exhibition. Upon this work he has exhausted all his powers, and suspended all his expectations: and, certainly, to be refused an opportunity of taking the opinion of the publick, is in itself a very great hardship. It is to be condemned without a trial.

"If you could procure the revocation of this incapacitating edict, you would deliver an unhappy man from great affliction. The Council has sometimes reversed its own determination; and I hope, that by your interposition this luckless picture may be got admitted. I am, &c.

"April 12, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

1783.
Ætat. 74.

"TO MR. BARRY.

"SIR,

"MR. Lowe's exclusion from the exhibition gives him more trouble than you and the other gentlemen of the Council could imagine or intend, He considers disgrace and ruin as the inevitable consequence of your determination.

He says, that some pictures have been received after rejection; and if there be any such precedent, I earnestly intreat that you will use your interest in his favour. Of his work I can say nothing; I pretend not to judge of painting; and this picture I never saw: but I conceive it extremely hard to shut out any man from the possibility of success; and therefore I repeat my request that you will propose the re-consideration of Mr. Lowe's case; and if there be any among the Council with whom my name can have any weight, be pleased to communicate to them the desire of, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"April 12, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Such intercession was too powerful to be resisted; and Mr. Lowe's performance was admitted at Somerset Place. The subject, as I recollect, was the Deluge, at that point of time when the water was verging to the top of the last uncovered mountain. Near to the spot was seen the last of the antediluvian race, exclusive of those who were saved in the ark of Noah. This was one of those giants, then the inhabitants of the earth, who had still strength to swim, and with one of his hands held aloft his infant child. Up-

on the small remaining dry spot appeared a famished lion, ready to spring at the child and devour it. Mr. Lowe told me that Johnson said to him, "Sir, your picture is noble and probable."—"A compliment, indeed, (said Mr. Lowe,) from a man who cannot lie, and cannot be mistaken." 1783. Ætat. 74.

About this time he wrote to Mrs. Lucy Porter, mentioning his bad health, and that he intended a visit to Lichfield. "It is, (says he,) with no great expectation of amendment that I make every year a journey into the country; but it is pleasant to visit those whose kindness has been often experienced."

On April 18, (being Good-Friday) I found him at breakfast, in his usual manner upon that day, drinking tea without milk, and eating a cross bun to prevent faintness; we went to St. Clement's church, as formerly. When we came home from church, he placed himself on one of the stone-seats at his garden door, and I took the other, and thus in the open air and in a placid frame of mind, he talked away very easily. JOHNSON. "Were I a country gentleman, I should not be very hospitable, I should not have crowds in my house." BOSWELL. "Sir Alexander Dick tells me, that he remembers having a thousand people in a year to dine at his house; that is, reckoning each person as one, each time that he dined there." JOHNSON. "That, Sir, is about three a day." BOSWELL. "How your statement lessens the idea." JOHNSON. "That, Sir, is the good of counting. It brings every thing to a certainty, which before floated in the mind indefinitely." BOSWELL. "But *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est:* one is sorry to have this diminished." JOHNSON. "Sir, you should not allow yourself to be delighted with errour." BOSWELL. "Three a day seem but few."

1783. Æat. 74. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, he who entertains three a day, does very liberally. And if there is a large family, the poor entertain those three, for they eat what the poor would get: there must be superfluous meat; it must be given to the poor, or thrown out." BOSWELL. "I observe in London, that the poor go about and gather bones, which I understand are manufactured. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; they boil them, and extract a grease from them for greasing wheels and other purposes. Of the best pieces they make a mock ivory, which is used for hafts to knives, and various other things; the coarser pieces they burn and pound, and sell the ashes." BOSWELL. "For, what purpose, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, for making a furnace for the chemists for melting iron. A paste made of burnt bones will stand a stronger heat than any thing else. Consider, Sir; if you are to melt iron, you cannot line your pot with brass, because it is softer than iron, and would melt sooner; nor with iron, for though malleable iron is harder than cast iron, yet it would not do; but a paste of burnt-bones will not melt. BOSWELL. "Do you know, Sir, I have discovered a manufacture to a great extent, of what you only piddle at,—scraping and drying the peel of oranges.[6] At a place in Newgate-street, there is a prodigious quantity prepared, which they sell to the distillers. JOHNSON. "Sir, I believe they make a higher thing out of them than a spirit; they make what is called orange-butter, the oil of the orange inspissated, which they mix perhaps with

[6] It is suggested to me by an anonymous Annotator on my Work, that the reason why Dr. Johnson collected the peels of squeezed oranges, may be found, in the 358th Letter in Mrs. Piozzi's Collection, where it appears that he recommended "dried orange-peel, finely powdered," as a medicine.

common pomatum, and make it flagrant. The oil does not fly off in the drying." 1783. Ætat. 74.

BOSWELL. "I wish to have a good walled garden." JOHNSON. "I don't think it would be worth the expence to you. We compute in England, a park-wall at a thousand pounds a mile; now a garden-wall must cost at least as much. You intend your trees should grow higher than a deer will leap. Now let us see;—for a hundred pounds you could only have forty-four square yards, which is very little; for two hundred pounds, you may have eighty-four square yards, which is very well. But when will you get the value of two hundred pounds of walls, in fruit, in your climate? No, Sir, such contention with Nature is not worth while. I would plant an orchard, and have plenty of such fruit as ripen well in your country. My friend, Dr. Madden, of Ireland, said, that, 'in an orchard there should be enough to eat, enough to lay up, enough to be stolen, and enough to rot upon the ground.' Cherries are an early fruit, you may have them; and you may have the early apples and pears." BOSWELL. "We cannot have nonpareils."—JOHNSON. "Sir, you can no more have nonpareils than you can have grapes." BOSWELL. "We have them, Sir; but they are very bad." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, never try to have a thing merely to shew that you *cannot* have it. From ground that would let for forty shillings you may have a large orchard; and you see it costs you only forty shillings. Nay, you may graze the ground when the trees are grown up; you cannot, while they are young." BOSWELL. "Is not a good garden a very common thing in England, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Not so common, Sir, as you imagine. In Lincolnshire there is hardly an

1783. Ætat. 74. orchard; in Staffordshire very little fruit." BOSWELL. "Has Langton no orchard?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir." BOSWELL. "How so, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, from the general negligence of the county. He has it not, because nobody else has it." BOSWELL. "A hot-house is a certain thing; I may have that." JOHNSON. "A hot-house is pretty certain; but you must first build it, then you must keep fires in it, and you must have a gardener to take care of it." BOSWELL. "But if I have a gardener at any rate?—" JOHNSON. "Why, yes." BOSWELL. "I'd have it near my house; there is no need to have it in the orchard." JOHNSON. "Yes, I'd have it near my house.—I would plant a great many currants; the fruit is good, and they make a pretty sweetmeat."

I record this minute detail, which some may think trifling, in order to shew clearly how this great man, whose mind could grasp such large and extensive subjects, as he has shewn in his literary labours, was yet well-informed in the common affairs of life, and loved to illustrate them.

Mr. Walker, the celebrated master of elocution, came in, and then we went up stairs into the study. I asked him if he had taught many clergymen. JOHNSON. "I hope not." WALKER. "I have taught only one, and he is the best reader I ever heard, not by my teaching, but by his own natural talents." JOHNSON. "Were he the best reader in the world, I would not have it told that he was taught." Here was one of his peculiar prejudices. Could it be any disadvantage to the clergyman to have it known that he was taught an easy and graceful delivery? BOSWELL. "Will you not allow, Sir, that a man may be taught to read well?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, so far

as to read better than he might do without being taught, yes. Formerly it was supposed that there was no difference in reading, but that one read as well as another." BOSWELL. "It is wonderful to see old Sheridan as enthusiastick about oratory as ever." WALKER. "His enthusiasm as to what oratory will do, may be too great: but he reads well." JOHNSON. "He reads well, but he reads low; and you know it is much easier to read low than to read high; for when you read high, you are much more limited, your loudest note can be but one, and so the variety is less in proportion to the loudness. Now some people have occasion to speak to an extensive audience, and must speak loud to be heard." WALKER. "The art is to read strong, though low."

Talking of the origin of language;—JOHNSON. "It must have come by inspiration. A thousand, nay, a million of children could not invent a language. While the organs are pliable, there is not understanding enough to form a language; by the time that there is understanding enough, the organs are become stiff. We know that after a certain age we cannot learn to pronounce a new language. No foreigner, who comes to England when advanced in life, ever pronounces English tolerably well; at least such instances are very rare. When I maintain that language must have come by inspiration, I do not mean that inspiration is required for rhetorick, and all the beauties of language; for when once man has language, we can conceive that he may gradually form modifications of it. I mean only that inspiration seems to me to be necessary to give man the faculty of speech; to inform him that he may have speech; which I think he could no more find out without inspiration, than cows or hogs would think

1783. "of such a faculty." Walker. "Do you think, Sir,
Ætat. 74. that there are any perfect synonimes in any language?" Johnson. "Originally there were not; but by using words negligently, or in poetry, one word comes to be confounded with another."

He talked of Dr. Dodd. "A friend of mine, (said he,) came to me and told me, that a lady wished to have Dr. Dodd's picture in a bracelet, and asked me for a motto. I said, I could think of no better than *Currat Lex*. I was very willing to have him pardoned, that is, to have the sentence changed to transportation: but, when he was once hanged, I did not wish he should be made a saint."

Mrs. Burney, wife of his friend Dr. Burney, came in, and he seemed to be entertained with her conversation.

Garrick's funeral was talked of as extravagantly expensive. Johnson, from his dislike to exaggeration, would not allow that it was distinguished by any extraordinary pomp. "Were there not six horses to each coach?" said Mrs. Burney. Johnson. "Madam, there were no more six horses than six phœnixes."

Mrs. Burney wondered that some very beautiful new buildings should be erected in Moorfields, in so shocking a situation as between Bedlam and St. Luke's Hospital; and said she could not live there. Johnson. "Nay, Madam, you see nothing there to hurt you. You no more think of madness by having windows that look to Bedlam, than you think of death by having windows that look to a church-yard." Mrs. Burney. "We may look to a church-yard, Sir; for it is right that we should be kept in mind of death." Johnson. "Nay, Madam, if you go to that, it is right that we should be kept in mind of madness, which is occasioned by too much indul-

gence of imagination. I think a very moral use may be made of these new buildings: I would have those who have heated imaginations live there, and take warning." MRS. BURNEY. "But, Sir, many of the poor people that are mad, have become so from disease, or from distressing events. It is, therefore, not their fault, but their misfortune; and, therefore, to think of them, is a melancholy consideration." 1783. Ætat. 74.

Time passed on in conversation till it was too late for the service of the church at three o'clock. I took a walk, and left him alone for some time; then returned, and we had coffee and conversation again by ourselves.

I stated the character of a noble friend of mine, as a curious case for his opinion:—"He is the most inexplicable man to me that I ever knew. Can you explain him, Sir? He is, I really believe, noble-minded, generous, and princely. But his most intimate friends may be separated from him for years, without his ever asking a question concerning them. He will meet them with a formality, a coldness, a stately indifference; but when they come close to him, and fairly engage him in conversation, they find him as easy, pleasant, and kind, as they could wish. One then supposes that what is so agreeable will soon be renewed; but stay away from him for half a year, and he will neither call on you, nor send to enquire about you." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I cannot ascertain his character exactly, as I do not know him; but I should not like to have such a man for my friend. He may love study, and wish not to be interrupted by his friends; *Amici fures temporis*. He may be a frivolous man, and be so much occupied with petty pursuits, that he may not want friends. Or he may have a notion that there is a dignity in appearing in-

1783. Ætat. 74. different, while he in fact may not be more indifferent at his heart than another."

We went to evening prayers at St. Clement's, at seven, and then parted.

On Sunday, April 20, being Easter-day, after attending solemn service at St. Paul's, I came to Dr. Johnson, and found Mr. Lowe, the painter, sitting with him. Mr. Lowe mentioned the great number of new buildings of late in London, yet that Dr. Johnson had observed, that the number of inhabitants was not increased. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the bills of mortality prove that no more people die now than formerly; so it is plain no more live. The register of births proves nothing, for not one tenth of the people of London are born there." BOSWELL. "I believe, Sir, a great many of the children born in London die early." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir." BOSWELL. "But those who do live, are as stout and strong people as any: Dr. Price says, they must be naturally strong to get through." JOHNSON. "That is system, Sir. A great traveller observes, that it is said there are no weak or deformed people among the Indians; but he with much sagacity assigns the reason of this, which is, that the hardship of their life as hunters and fishers, does not allow weak or diseased children to grow up. Now had I been an Indian, I must have died early; my eyes would not have served me to get food. I indeed now could fish, give me English tackle; but had I been an Indian I must have starved, or they would have knocked me on the head, when they saw I could do nothing." BOSWELL. "Perhaps they would have taken care of you; we are told they are fond of oratory, you would have talked to them." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I should not have lived long enough to

be fit to talk; I should have been dead before I was ten years old. Depend upon it, Sir, a savage, when he is hungry, will not carry about with him a looby of nine years old, who cannot help himself. They have no affection, Sir." BOSWELL. "I believe natural affection, of which we hear so much, is very small." JOHNSON. "Sir, natural affection is nothing: but affection from principle and established duty, is sometimes wonderfully strong." LOWE. "A hen, Sir, will feed her chickens in preference to herself." JOHNSON. "But we don't know that the hen is hungry; let the hen be fairly hungry, and I'll warrant she'll peck the corn herself. A cock, I believe, will feed hens instead of himself; but we don't know that the cock is hungry." BOSWELL. "And that, Sir, is not from affection but gallantry. But some of the Indians have affection." JOHNSON. "Sir, that they help some of their children is plain; for some of them live, which they could not do without being helped."

I dined with him; the company were, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Desmoulins, and Mr. Lowe. He seemed not to be well, talked little, grew drowsy soon after dinner, and retired, upon which I went away.

Having next day gone to Mr. Burke's seat in the country, from whence I was recalled by an express, that a near relation of mine had killed his antagonist in a duel, and was himself dangerously wounded, I saw little of Dr. Johnson till Monday, April 28, when I spent a considerable part of the day with him, and introduced the subject, which then chiefly occupied my mind. JOHNSON. "I do not see, Sir, that fighting is absolutely forbidden in Scripture; I see revenge forbidden, but not self-defence." BOSWELL. "The Quakers say it is; 'Unto him that

1783. "smiteth thee on one cheek, offer him also the other."
Ætat. 74. JOHNSON. "But stay, Sir; the text is meant only to have the effect of moderating passion; it is plain that we are not to take it in a literal sense. We see this from the context, where there are other recommendations, which I warrant you the Quaker will not take literally; as, for instance, 'From him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away.' Let a man whose credit is bad, come to a Quaker, and say, 'Well, Sir, lend me a hundred pounds;' he'll find him as unwilling as any other man. No, Sir, a man may shoot the man who invades his character, as he may shoot him who attempts to break into his house.[7] So in 1745, my friend, Tom Cumming the Quaker, said he would not fight, but he would drive an ammunition cart; and we know that the Quakers have sent flannel waistcoats to our soldiers, to enable them to fight better." BOSWELL. "When a man is the aggressor, and by ill-usage forces on a duel in which

[7] I think it necessary to caution my readers against concluding that in this or any other conversation of Dr. Johnson, they have his serious and deliberate opinion on the subject of duelling. In my Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 3 edit. p. 386, it appears that he made this frank confession: "Nobody at times, talks more laxly than I do;" and, ibid. p. 231. "He fairly owned he could not explain the rationality of duelling." We may, therefore, infer, that he could not think that justifiable, which seems so inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel. At the same time it must be confessed, that from the prevalent notions of honour, a gentleman who receives a challenge is reduced to a dreadful alternative. A remarkable instance of this is furnished by a clause in the will of the late Colonel Thomas, of the Guards, written the night before he fell in a duel, September 3, 1783: "In the first place, I commit my soul to Almighty GOD, in hopes of his mercy and pardon for the irreligious step I now (in compliance with the unwarrantable customs of this wicked world) put myself under the necessity of taking.

he is killed, have we not little ground to hope that, 1783.
he is gone to a state of happiness?" JOHNSON. Ætat. 74.
"Sir, we are not to judge determinately of the state in which a man leaves this life. He may in a moment have repented effectually, and it is possible may have been accepted of GOD. There is in 'Camden's Remains,' an epitaph upon a very wicked man, who was killed by a fall from his horse, in which he is supposed to say,

"Between the stirrup and the ground,
"I mercy ask'd, I mercy found."[8]

BOSWELL. "Is not the expression in the Burial-service, 'in the *sure* and *certain* hope of a blessed resurrection; too strong to be used indiscriminately, and, indeed, sometimes when those over whose bodies it is said, have been notoriously profane?" JOHNSON. "It is sure and certain *hope*, Sir; not *belief*." I did not insist further; but cannot help thinking that less positive words would be more proper.[9]

[8] [In repeating this epitaph Johnson improved it. The original runs thus:

"*Betwixt* the stirrup and the ground,
"Mercy I asked, mercy I found." M.]

[9] Upon this objection the Reverend Mr. Ralph Churton, Fellow of Brazennose College, Oxford, has favoured me with the following satisfactory observation. "The passage in the Burial-service, does not mean the resurrection of the person interred, but the general resurrection; it is in sure and certain hope of *the* resurrection; not *his* resurrection. Where the deceased is really spoken of, the expression is very different, "as our hope is this our brother doth," [rest in Christ] a mode of speech consistent with every thing but absolute certainty that the person departed doth *not* rest in Christ, which no one can be assured of, without

1783. Ætat. 74. Talking of a man who was grown very fat, so as to be incommoded with corpulency; he said, "He eats too much, Sir." BOSWELL. "I don't know, Sir, you will see one man fat who eats moderately, and another lean who eats a great deal." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, whatever may be the quantity that a man eats, it is plain that if he is too fat, he has eaten more than he should have done. One man may have a digestion that consumes food better than common; but it is certain that solidity is encreased by putting something to it." BOSWELL. "But may not solids swell and be distended?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, they may swell and be distended; but that is not fat."

We talked of the accusation against a gentleman for supposed delinquencies in India. JOHNSON. "What foundation there is for accusation I know not, but they will not get at him. Where bad actions are committed at so great a distance, a delinquent can obscure the evidence till the scent becomes cold; there is a cloud between which cannot be penetrated: therefore all distant power is bad. I am clear that the best plan for the government of India is a despotick governour; for if he be a good man, it is evidently the best government; and supposing him to be a bad man, it is better to have one plunderer than many. A governour, whose power is checked, lets others plunder, that he himself may be allowed to plunder; but if despotick, he sees that the more he lets others plunder, the less there will be

immediate revelation from Heaven. In the first of these places also, "eternal life" does not necessarily mean eternity of bliss, but merely the eternity of the state, whether in happiness or in misery, to ensue upon the resurrection; which is probably the sense of "the life everlasting," in the Apostles Creed. See Wheatly and Bennet on the Common Prayer."

for himself, so he restrains them; and though he himself plunders, the country is a gainer, compared with being plundered by numbers." 1783. Ætat. 74.

I mentioned the very liberal payment which had been received for reviewing; and, as evidence of this, that it had been proved in a trial, that Dr. Shebbeare had received six guineas a sheet for that kind of literary labour. JOHNSON. "Sir, he might get six guineas for a particular sheet, but not *communibus sheetibus*." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, by a sheet of review is it meant that it shall be all of the writer's own composition? or are extracts, made from the book reviewed, deducted." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; it is a sheet, no matter of what." BOSWELL. "I think that it is not reasonable." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, it is. A man will more easily write a sheet all his own, than read an octavo volume to get extracts." To one of Johnson's wonderful fertility of mind, I believe writing was really easier than reading and extracting; but with ordinary men the case is very different. A great deal, indeed, will depend upon the care and judgement with which extracts are made. I can suppose the operation to be tedious and difficult; but in many instances we must observe crude morsels cut out of books as if at random; and when a large extract is made from one place, it surely may be done with very little trouble. One, however, I must acknowledge, might be led, from the practice of reviewers, to suppose that they take a pleasure in original writing; for we often find, that instead of giving an accurate account of what has been done by the authour whose work they are reviewing, which is surely the proper business of a literary journal, they produce some plausible and ingenious conceits

1783. Ætat. 74. of their own, upon the topicks which have been discussed.

Upon being told that old Mr. Sheridan, indignant at the neglect of his oratorical plans, had threatened to go to America;—JOHNSON. "I hope he will go to America." BOSWELL. "The Americans don't want oratory." JOHNSON. "But we can want Sheridan."

On Monday, April 29, I found him at home in the forenoon, and Mr. Seward with him. Horace having been mentioned;—BOSWELL. "There is a great deal of thinking in his works. One finds there almost every thing but religion." SEWARD. "He speaks of his returning to it, in his Ode *Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens*." JOHNSON. "Sir, he was not in earnest; this was merely poetical." BOSWELL. "There are, I am afraid, many people who have no religion at all." SEWARD. "And sensible people too." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, not sensible in that respect. There must be either a natural or a moral stupidity, if one lives in a total neglect of so very important a concern." SEWARD. "I wonder that there should be people without religion." JOHNSON. "Sir, you need not wonder at this, when you consider how large a proportion of almost every man's life is passed without thinking of it. I myself was for some years totally regardless of religion. It had dropped out of my mind. It was at an early part of my life. Sickness brought it back, and I hope I have never lost it since." BOSWELL. "My dear Sir, what a man must you have been without religion! Why you must have gone on drinking, and swearing, and—" JOHNSON. (with a smile) "I drank enough and swore enough to be sure." SEWARD. "One

should think that sickness, and the view of death would make more men religious." JOHNSON. "Sir, they do not know how to go about it: they have not the first notion. A man who has never had religion before, no more grows religious when he is sick, than a man who has never learnt figures can count when he has need of calculation."

1783. Ætat. 74.

I mentioned a worthy friend of ours whom we valued much, but observed that he was too ready to introduce religious discourse upon all occasions. JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, he will introduce religious discourse without seeing whether it will end in instruction and improvement, or produce some profane jest. He would introduce it in the company of Wilkes, and twenty more such."

I mentioned Dr. Johnson's excellent distinction between liberty of conscience and liberty of teaching. JOHNSON. "Consider, Sir; if you have children whom you wish to educate in the principles of the Church of England, and there comes a Quaker who tries to pervert them to his principles, you would drive away the Quaker. You would not trust to the predomination of right; which you believe is in your opinions; you will keep wrong out of their heads. Now the vulgar are the children of the State. If any one attempts to teach them doctrines contrary to what the State approves, the magistrate may and ought to restrain him." SEWARD. "Would you restrain private conversation, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is difficult to say where private conversation begins, and where it ends. If we three should discuss even the great question concerning the existence of a Supreme Being by ourselves, we should not be restrained; for that would be to put an end to all im-

1783. Ætat. 74. provement. But if we should discuss it in the presence of ten boarding-school girls, and as many boys, I think the magistrate would do well to put us in the stocks, to finish the debate there."

Lord Hailes had sent him a present of a curious little printed poem, on repairing the University of Aberdeen, by David *Malloch*, which he thought would please Johnson, as affording clear evidence that Mallet had appeared even as a literary character by the name of *Malloch*; his changing which to one of softer sound, had given Johnson occasion to introduce him into his Dictionary, under the article *Alias*.[1] This piece was, I suppose, one of Mallet's first essays. It is preserved in his works, with several variations. Johnson having read aloud, from the beginning of it, where there were some common-place assertions as to the superiority of ancient times;—"How false (said he) is all this, to say that in ancient times learning was not a disgrace to a Peer as it is now. In ancient times a Peer was as ignorant as any one else. He would have been angry to have it thought

[1] [Malloch, as Mr. Bindley observes to me, "continued to write his name thus, *after he came to London*. His verses prefixed to the second edition of Thomson's 'Winter' are so subscribed, and so are his Letters written in London, and published a few years ago in 'the European Magazine;' but he soon afterwards adopted the alteration to Mallet, for he is so called in the list of Subscribers to Savage's Miscellanies printed in 1726; and thenceforward uniformly *Mallet*, in all his writings." M.]

[A notion has been entertained, that no such exemplification of *Alias* is to be found in Johnson's Dictionary, and that the whole story was waggishly fabricated by Wilkes in the NORTH BRITAIN. The real fact is, that it is not to be found in the Folio, or Quarto editions, but was added by Johnson in his own *Octavo* Abridgement, in 1756. J. B.—O.]

he could write his name. Men in ancient times dared to stand forth with a degree of ignorance with which nobody would dare now to stand forth. I am always angry, when I hear ancient times praised at the expence of modern times. There is now a great deal more learning in the world than there was formerly; for it is universally diffused. You have, perhaps, no man who knows as much Greek and Latin as Bentley; no man who knows as much mathematicks as Newton: but you may have many more men who know Greek and Latin, and who know mathematicks." 1783 Ætat. 74.

On Thursday, May 1, I visited him in the evening along with young Mr. Burke. He said, "It is strange that there should be so little reading in the world, and so much writing. People in general do not willingly read, if they can have any thing else to amuse them. There must be an external impulse; emulation, or vanity, or avarice. The progress which the understanding makes through a book, has more pain than pleasure in it. Language is scanty, and inadequate to express the nice gradations and mixtures of our feelings. No man reads a book of science from pure inclination. The books that we do read with pleasure are light compositions, which contain a quick succession of events. However, I have this year read all Virgil through. I read a book of the Æneid every night, so it was done in twelve nights, and I had a great delight in it. The Georgicks did not give me so much pleasure, except the fourth book. The Eclogues I have almost all by heart. I do not think the story of the Æneid interesting. I like the story of the Odyssey much better; and this not on account of the wonderful things

1783. which it contains; for there are wonderful things
Ætat. 74. enough in the Æneid;—the ships of the Trojans turned to sea-nymphs,—the tree at Polydorus's tomb dropping blood. The story of the Odyssey is interesting, as a great part of it is domestick.—It has been said, there is pleasure in writing, particularly in writing verses. I allow, you may have pleasure from writing, after it is over, if you have written well;[2] but you don't go willingly to it again. I know when I have been writing verses, I have run my finger down the margin, to see how many I had made, and how few I had to make."

He seemed to be in a very placid humour, and although I have no note of the particulars of young Mr. Burke's conversation, it is but justice to mention in general, that it was such that Dr. Johnson said to me afterwards, "He did very well indeed; I have a mind to tell his father."

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,

"THE gentleman who waits on you with this, is Mr. Cruikshanks, who wishes to succeed his friend Dr. Hunter, as Professor of Anatomy in the Royal Academy. His qualifications are very generally known, and it adds dignity to the institution that such men[3] are candidates. I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 2, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[2] [Dum pingit, fruitur arte; postquam pinxerat, fruitur fructu artis. SENECA. K.]

[3] Let it be remembered by those who accuse Dr. Johnson of illiberality, that both were *Scotchmen*.

I have no minute of any interview with Johnson till Thursday, May 15th, when I find what follows: BOSWELL. "I wish much to be in Parliament, Sir." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, unless you come resolved to support any administration, you would be the worse for being in Parliament, because you would be obliged to live more expensively."—BOSWELL. "Perhaps, Sir, I should be the less happy for being in Parliament. I never would sell my vote, and I should be vexed if things went wrong." JOHNSON. "That's cant, Sir. It would not vex you more in the house, than in the gallery: public affairs vex no man." BOSWELL. "Have not they vexed yourself a little, Sir? Have not you been vexed by all the turbulence of this reign, and by that absurd vote of the House of Commons, 'That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I have never slept an hour less, nor eat an ounce less meat. I would have knocked the factious dogs on the head, to be sure; but I was not *vexed*." BOSWELL. "I declare, Sir, upon my honour, I did imagine I was vexed, and took a pride in it; but it *was*, perhaps, cant; for I own I neither eat less, nor slept less." JOHNSON. "My dear friend, clear your *mind* of cant. You may *talk* as other people do: you may say to a man, 'Sir, I am your most humble servant.' You are *not* his most humble servant. You may say, 'These are bad times; it is a melancholy thing to be reserved to such times.' You don't mind the times. You tell a man, 'I am sorry you had such bad weather the last day of your journey, and were so much wet.' You don't care six-pence whether he is wet or dry. You may *talk* in this manner; it is a mode of talking in Society: but don't *think* foolishly."

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1783. Ætat. 74. I talked of living in the country. JOHNSON. "Don't set up for what is called hospitality: it is a waste of time, and a waste of money; you are eaten up, and not the more respected for your liberality. If your house be like an inn, nobody cares for you. A man who stays a week with another, makes him a slave for a week." BOSWELL. "But there are people, Sir, who make their houses a home to their guests, and are themselves quite easy." JOHNSON. "Then, Sir, home must be the same to the guests, and they need not come."

Here he discovered a notion common enough in persons not much accustomed to entertain company, that there must be a degree of elaborate attention, otherwise company will think themselves neglected; and such attention is no doubt very fatiguing. He proceeded: "I would not, however, be a stranger in my own country; I would visit my neighbours, and receive their visits; but I would not be in haste to return visits. If a gentleman comes to see me, I tell him he does me a great deal of honour. I do not go to see him perhaps for ten weeks; then we are very complaisant to each other. No, Sir, you will have much more influence by giving or lending money where it is wanted, than by hospitality."

On Saturday, May 17, I saw him for a short time. Having mentioned that I had that morning been with old Mr. Sheridan, he remembered their former intimacy with a cordial warmth, and said to me, "Tell Mr. Sheridan, I shall be glad to see him, and shake hands with him." BOSWELL. "It is to me very wonderful that resentment should be kept up so long." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is not altogether resentment that he does not visit me; it is partly

falling out of the habit,—partly disgust, as one has at a drug that has made him sick. Besides, he knows that I laugh at his oratory." 1783. Ætat. 74.

Another day I spoke of one of our friends, of whom he, as well as I, had a very high opinion. He expatiated in his praise; but added, "Sir, he is a cursed Whig, a *bottomless* Whig, as they all are now."

I mentioned my expectations from the interest of an eminent person then in power; adding, "but I have no claim but the claim of friendship; however, some people will go a great way for that motive." JOHNSON. "Sir, they will go all the way from that motive." A gentleman talked of retiring. "Never think of that," said Johnson. The gentleman urged, "I should then do no ill." JOHNSON. "Nor no good either. Sir, it would be a civil suicide."

On Monday, May 26, I found him at tea, and the celebrated Miss Burney, the authour of "Evelina" and "Cecilia," with him. I asked, if there would be any speakers in Parliament, if there were no places to be obtained. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir. Why do you speak here? Either to instruct and entertain, which is a benevolent motive; or for distinction, which is a selfish motive." I mentioned "Cecilia." JOHNSON. (with an air of animated satisfaction) "Sir, if you talk of 'Cecilia,' talk on."

We talked of Mr. Barry's exhibition of his pictures. JOHNSON. "Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there, which you find no where else."[4]

[4] In Mr. Barry's printed analysis, or description of these pictures, he speaks of Johnson's character in the highest terms.

1783. Ætat. 74. "I asked, whether a man naturally virtuous, or one who has overcome wicked inclinations, is the best. JOHNSON. "Sir, to *you*, the man who has overcome wicked inclinations, is not the best. He has more merit to *himself*: I would rather trust my money to a man who has no hands, and so a physical impossibility to steal, than to a man of the most honest principles. There is a witty satirical story of Foote. He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. 'You may be surprised (said he) that I allow him to be so near my gold;—but you will observe, he has no hands."

On Friday, May 29, being to set out for Scotland next morning, I passed a part of the day with him in more than usual earnestness; as his health was in a more precarious state than at any time when I had parted from him. He, however, was quick and lively, and critical, as usual. I mentioned one who was a very learned man. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, he has a great deal of learning; but it never lies straight. There is never one idea by the side of another; 'tis all entangled: and then he drives it so aukwardly upon conversation!"

I stated to him an anxious thought, by which a sincere Christian might be disturbed, even when conscious of having lived a good life, so far as is consistent with human infirmity; he might fear that he should afterwards fall away, and be guilty of such crimes as would render all his former religion vain. Could there be, upon this aweful subject, such a thing as balancing of accounts? Suppose a man who has led a good life for seven years, commits an act of wickedness, and instantly dies; will his former good

life have any effect in his favour? JOHNSON. "Sir, if a man has led a good life for seven years, and then is hurried by passion to do what is wrong, and is suddenly carried off, depend upon it he will have the reward of his seven years' good life: GOD will not take a catch of him. Upon this principle Richard Baxter believes that a Suicide may be saved. 'If (says he) it should be objected that what I maintain may encourage suicide, I answer, I am not to tell a lie to prevent it.'" BOSWELL. "But does not the text say, 'As the tree falls, so it must lie?'" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; as the tree falls: but,—(after a little pause)—that is meant as to the general state of the tree, not what is the effect of a sudden blast." In short, he interpreted the expression as referring to condition, not to position. The common notion, therefore, seems to be erroneous; and Shenstone's witty remark on Divines trying to give the tree a jerk upon a death-bed, to make it lie favourably, is not well founded.

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I asked him what works of Richard Baxter's I should read. He said "Read any of them; they are all good."

He said, "Get as much force of mind as you can. Live within your income. Always have something saved at the end of the year. Let your imports be more than your exports, and you'll never go far wrong."

I assured him, that in the extensive and various range of his acquaintance there never had been any one who had a more sincere respect and affection for him than I had. He said "I believe it, Sir. Were I in distress, there is no man to whom I should sooner come than to you. I should like to come and have

1783. Ætat. 74. a cottage in your park, toddle about, live mostly on milk, and be taken care of by Mrs. Boswell. She and I are good friends now; are we not?"

Talking of devotion, he said, "Though it be true that 'God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands,' yet in this state of being, our minds are more piously affected in places appropriated to divine worship, than in others. Some people have a particular room in their houses, where they say their prayers; of which I do not disapprove, as it may animate their devotion."

He embraced me, and gave me his blessing, as usual when I was leaving him for any length of time. I walked from his door to-day, with a fearful apprehension of what might happen before I returned.

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM WINDHAM.

"SIR,

"The bringer of this letter is the father of Miss Philips,[5] a singer, who comes to try her voice on the stage at Dublin.

"Mr. Philips is one of my old friends; and as I am of opinion that neither he nor his daughter will do any thing that can disgrace their benefactors, I take the liberty of entreating you to countenance and protect them so far as may be suitable to your station[6] and character; and shall consider myself as

[5] Now the celebrated Mrs. Crouch.

[6] Mr. Windham was at this time in Dublin, Secretary to the Earl of Northington, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

obliged by any favourable notice which they shall have the honour of receiving from you. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"London, May 31, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

The following is another instance of his active benevolence:

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE sent you some of my god-son's[7] performances, of which I do not pretend to form any opinion. When I took the liberty of mentioning him to you, I do not know what I have since been told, that Mr. Moser had admitted him among the Students of the Academy. What more can be done for him, I earnestly entreat you to consider; for I am very desirous that he should derive some advantage from my connection with him. If you are inclined to see him, I will bring him to wait on you, at any time that you shall be pleased to appoint.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"June 2, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

My anxious apprehensions at parting with him this year, proved to be but too well founded; for not long afterwards he had a dreadful stroke of the palsy, of which there are very full and accurate accounts in letters written by himself, to shew with

[7] Son of Mr. Samuel Patterson.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARA

1783. Ætat. 74. what composure of mind, and resignation to the Divine Will, his steady piety enabled him to behave.

"TO MR. EDMUND ALLEN.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT has pleased GOD, this morning, to deprive me of the powers of speech; and as I do not know but that it may be his further good pleasure to deprive me soon of my senses, I request you will on the receipt of this note, come to me, and act for me, as the exigences of my case may require.

"I am,

"Sincerely yours,

"June 17, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO THE REVEREND DR. JOHN TAYLOR.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT has pleased GOD, by a paralytick stroke in the night, to deprive me of speech.

"I am very desirous of Dr. Heberden's assistance, as I think my case is not past remedy. Let me see you as soon as it is possible. Bring Dr. Heberden with you, if you can; but come yourself at all events. I am glad you are so well, when I am so dreadfully attacked.

"I think that by a speedy application of stimulants much may be done. I question if a vomit, vigorous and rough, would not rouse the organs of speech to action. As it is too early to send, I will try to recollect what I can, that can be suspected to have brought on this dreadful distress.

"I have been accustomed to bleed frequently for an asthmatick complaint; but have forborne for

some time by Dr. Pepys's persuasion, who perceived my legs beginning to swell. I sometimes alleviate a painful, or more properly an oppressive, constriction of my chest, by opiates; and have lately taken opium frequently, but the last, or two last times, in smaller quantities. My largest dose is three grains, and last night I took but two. You will suggest these things (and they are all that I can call to mind) to Dr. Heberden. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"I am, &c.

"June 17, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Two days after he wrote thus to Mrs. Thrale:[8]

"On Monday, the 16th, I sat for my picture, and walked a considerable way with little inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed, and in a short time waked and sat up, as has been long my custom, when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted, I suppose, about half a minute. I was alarmed, and prayed GOD, that however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

"Soon after I perceived that I had suffered a paralytick stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful state, that I wondered at my own apathy,

[8] Vol. II. p. 268, of Mrs. Thrale's Collection.

1783. Ætat. 74. and considered that perhaps death itself, when it should come, would excite less horrour than seems now to attend it.

"In order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and I think repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and strange as it may seem, I think slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand; I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands.

"I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand, to act as occasion should require. In penning this note, I had some difficulty; my hand, I knew not how nor why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden: and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly, and give me great hopes; but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers, as to repeat the Lord's Prayer with no very imperfect articulation. My memory, I hope, yet remains as it was! but such an attack produces solicitude for the safety of every faculty."

"TO MR. THOMAS DAVIES. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE had, indeed, a very heavy blow; but GOD, who yet spares my life, I humbly hope will spare my understanding, and restore my speech. As I am not at all helpless, I want no particular assistance, but am strongly affected by Mrs. Davies's tenderness; and when I think she can do me good, shall be very glad to call upon her. I had ordered friends to be shut out; but one or two have found the way in; and if you come you shall be admitted: for I know not whom I can see, that will bring more amusement on his tongue, or more kindness in his heart. I am, &c.

"June 18, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

It gives me great pleasure to preserve such a memorial of Johnson's regard for Mr. Davies, to whom I was indebted for my introduction to him.[9] He indeed loved Davies cordially, of which I shall give the following little evidence. One day when he had treated him with too much asperity, Tom, who was not without pride and spirit, went off in a passion; but he had hardly reached home, when Frank, who had been sent after him, delivered this note: —"Come, come, dear Davies, I am always sorry when we quarrel; send me word that we are friends."

[9] Poor Derrick, however, though he did not himself introduce me to Dr. Johnson as he promised, had the merit of introducing me to Davies, the immediate introductor.

1783. Ætat. 74.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOUR anxiety about my health is very friendly, and very agreeable with your general kindness. I have, indeed, had a very frightful blow. On the 17th of last month, about three in the morning, as near as I can guess, I perceived myself almost totally deprived of speech. I had no pain. My organs were so obstructed that I could say *no*, but could scarcely say *yes*. I wrote the necessary directions, for it pleased GOD to spare my hand, and sent for Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby. Between the time in which I discovered my own disorder, and that in which I sent for the doctors, I had, I believe, in spite of my surprize and solicitude, a little sleep, and Nature began to renew its operations. They came and gave the directions which the disease required, and from that time I have been continually improving in articulation. I can now speak, but the nerves are weak, and I cannot continue discourse long; but strength, I hope, will return. The physicians consider me as cured. I was last Sunday at church. On Tuesday I took an airing to Hampstead, and dined with THE CLUB, where Lord Palmerston was proposed, and, against my opinion, was rejected.[1] I designed to go next week with Mr. Langton to Rochester, where I purpose to stay about ten days, and then try some other air. I have many kind invitations. Your brother has very frequently enquired after me. Most of my friends have, in-

[1] His Lordship was soon after chosen, and is now a member of THE CLUB.

deed, been very attentive. Thank dear Lord Hailes for his present. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"I hope you found at your return every thing gay and prosperous, and your lady, in particular, quite recovered and confirmed. Pay her my respects. I am, dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"London, July 3, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"DEAR MADAM,

"THE account which you give of your health is but melancholy. May it please GOD to restore you. My disease affected my speech, and still continues, in some degree, to obstruct my utterance; my voice is distinct enough for a while; but the organs being still weak are quickly weary: but in other respects I am, I think, rather better than I have lately been; and can let you know my state without the help of any other hand.

"In the opinion of my friends, and in my own, I am gradually mending. The physicians consider me as cured, and I had leave four days ago, to wash the cantharides from my head. Last Tuesday I dined at THE CLUB.

"I am going next week into Kent, and purpose to change the air frequently this summer; whether I shall wander so far as Staffordshire I cannot tell. I should be glad to come. Return my thanks to Mrs. Cobb, and Mr. Pearson, and all that have shewn attention to me.

"Let us, my dear, pray for one another, and con-

1783. sider our sufferings as notices mercifully given us to
Ætat. 74. prepare ourselves for another state.

"I live now but in a melancholy way. My old friend Mr. Levett is dead, who lived with me in the house, and was useful and companionable; Mrs. Desmoulins is gone away; and Mrs. Williams is so much decayed, that she can add little to another's gratifications. The world passes away, and we are passing with it; but there is, doubtless, another world, which will endure for ever. Let us all fit ourselves for it. I am, &c.

"London, July 5, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Such was the general vigour of his constitution, that he recovered from this alarming and severe attack with wonderful quickness; so that in July he was able to make a visit to Mr. Langton at Rochester, where he passed about a fortnight, and made little excursions as easily as at any time of his life. In August he went as far as the neighbourhood of Salisbury, to Heale, the seat of William Bowles, Esq. a gentleman whom I have heard him praise for exemplary religious order in his family. In his diary I find a short but honourable mention of this visit:—"August 28, I came to Heale without fatigue. 30. I am entertained quite to my mind."[2]

[2] [In his letter to Mrs. Thrale, written on the 13th of August, we find the following melancholy paragraph:

"I am now broken with disease, without the alleviation of familiar friendship or domestick society: I have no middle state between clamour and silence, between general conversation and felf-tormenting solitude. Levett is dead, and poor Williams is making haste to die: I know not if she will ever more come out of her chamber."

In a subsequent letter (August 26) he adds, "Mrs. Williams

"TO DR. BROCKLESBY. 1783.

Ætat. 74.

"DEAR SIR, "Heale, near Salisbury, Aug. 29, 1783.

"WITHOUT appearing to want a just sense of your kind attention, I cannot omit to give an account of the day which seemed to appear in some sort perilous. I rose at five, and went out at six; and having reached Salisbury about nine, went forward a few miles in my friend's chariot. I was no more wearied with the journey, though it was a high-hung, rough coach, than I should have been forty years ago. We shall now see what air will do. The country is all a plain; and the house in which I am, so far as I can judge from my window, for I write before I have left my chamber, is sufficiently pleasant.

"Be so kind as to continue your attention to Mrs. Williams; it is great consolation to the well, and still greater to the sick, that they find themselves not neglected; and I know that you will be

fancies now and then that she grows better, but her vital powers appear to be slowly burning out. Nobody thinks, however, that she will very soon be quite wasted, and as she suffers me to be of very little use to her, I have determined to pass some time with Mr. Bowles near Salisbury, and have taken a place for Thursday.'

"Some benefit may be perhaps received from change of air, some from change of company, and some from mere change of place. It is not easy to grow well in a chamber where one has long been sick, and where every thing seen, and every person speaking, revives and impresses images of pain. Though it be true, that no man can run away from himself, yet he may escape from many causes of useless uneasiness. That *the mind is its own place*, is the boast of a fallen angel that had learned to lie. External locality has great effects, at least upon all embodied beings. I hope this little journey will afford me at least some suspense of melancholy." M.]

1783. Ætat. 74. desirous of giving comfort, even where you have no great hope of giving help.

"Since I wrote the former part of the letter, I find that by the course of the post I cannot send it before the thirty-first. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

While he was here, he had a letter from Dr. Brocklesby, acquainting him of the death of Mrs. Williams,[3] which affected him a good deal. Though for several years her temper had not been complacent, she had valuable qualities, and her departure left a blank in his house. Upon this occasion he, according to his habitual course of piety, composed a prayer.[4]

I shall here insert a few particulars concerning him, with which I have been favoured by one of his friends.

[3] [In his letter to Miss Susanna Thrale, Sept. 9, 1783, he thus writes: "Pray shew Mamma this passage of a letter from Dr. Brocklesby. 'Mrs. Williams, from mere inanition, has at length paid the great debt to nature about three o'clock this morning (Sept. 6.) She died without a struggle, retaining her faculties to the very last, and, as she expressed it, having set her house in order, was prepared to leave it, at the last summons of nature."

In his letter to Mrs. Thrale, Sept, 22, he adds, "Poor Williams has, I hope, seen the end of her afflictions. She acted with prudence and she bore with fortitude. She has left me.

"Thou thy weary task has done,
"Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages."

Had she had good humour and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her. She has left her little to your charity-school." M.]

[4] Prayers and Meditations, p. 226.

"He had once conceived the design of writing the Life of Oliver Cromwell, saying, that he thought it must be highly curious to trace his extraordinary rise to the supreme power, from so obscure a beginning. He at length laid aside his scheme, on discovering that all that can be told of him is already in print; and that it is impracticable to procure any authentick information in addition to what the world is already possessed of.[5] 1783. Ætat. 74.

"He had likewise projected, but at what part of his life is not known, a work to shew how small a quantity of REAL FICTION there is in the world; and that the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authours who have ever written."

"His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his diseased friends. He often muttered, these, or such like sentences: 'Poor man! and then he died.'"

"Speaking of a certain literary friend, 'He is a very pompous puzzling fellow, (said he); he lent me a letter once that somebody had written to him,

[5] [Mr. Malone observes, "This, however, was entirely a mistake, as appears from the Memoirs published by Mr. Noble. Had Johnson been furnished with the materials which the industry of that gentleman has procured, and with others which, it is believed, are yet preserved in manuscript, he would, without doubt, have produced a most valuable and curious history of Cromwell's life."

[I may add, that, had Johnson given us a Life of Cromwell, we should not have been disgusted in numberless instances with—"My Lord Protector" and "My Lady PROTECTRESS;" and certainly the brutal ruffian who presided in the bloody assembly that murdered their sovereign, would have been characterized by very different epithets than those which are applied to him in this work, where we find him described as "the BOLD *and* DETERMINED Bradshaw." M.]

1783. no matter what it was about; but he wanted to
Ætat. 74. have the letter back, and expressed a mighty value for it; he hoped it was to be met with again, he would not lose it for a thousand pounds. I layed my hand upon it soon afterwards, and gave it him. I believe I said, I was very glad to have met with it. O, then he did not know that it signified any thing. So you see, when the letter was lost it was worth a thousand pounds, and when it was found it was not worth a farthing."

"The style and character of his conversation is pretty generally known; it was certainly conducted in conformity with a precept of Lord Bacon, but it is not clear, I apprehend, that this conformity was either perceived or intended by Johnson. The precept alluded to is as follows: 'In all kinds of speech, either pleasant, grave, severe, or ordinary, it is convenient to speak leisurely, and rather drawlingly than hastily: because hasty speech confounds the memory, and oftentimes, besides the unseemliness, drives a man either to stammering, a non-plus, or harping on that which should follow; whereas a slow speech confirmeth the memory, addeth a conceit of wisdom to the hearers, besides a seemliness of speech and countenance.'[6] Dr. Johnson's method of conversation was certainly calculated to excite attention, and to amuse and instruct, (as it happened,) without wearying or confusing his company. He was always most perfectly clear and perspicuous; and his language was so accurate, and his sentences so neatly constructed, that his conversation might have been

[6] [Hints for Civil Conversation.—Bacon's Works, 4to, vol. i. p. 571. M.]

all printed without any correction. At the same 1783.
time, it was easy and natural; the accuracy of it Ætat. 74.
had no appearance of labour, constraint, or stiffness; he seemed more correct than others, by the force of habit, and the customary exercises of his powerful mind."

"He spoke often in praise of French literature. 'The French are excellent in this, (he would say,) they have a book on every subject.' From what he had seen of them he denied them the praise of superior politeness, and mentioned, with very visible disgust, the custom they have of spitting on the floors of their apartments. 'This, (said the Doctor) is as gross a thing as can well be done; and one wonders how any man, or set of men, can persist in so offensive a practice for a whole day together; one should expect that the first effort towards civilization would remove it even among savages.

"Baxter's 'Reasons of the Christian religion,' he thought contained the best collection of the evidences of the divinity of the Christian system."

"Chymistry was always an interesting pursuit with Dr. Johnson. Whilst he was in Wiltshire, he attended some experiments that were made by a physician at Salisbury, on the new kinds of air. In the course of theexperiments frequent mention being made of Dr. Priestley, Dr. Johnson knit his brows, and in a stern manner enquired, 'Why do we hear so much of Dr. Priestley!'[7] He was very properly

[7] I do not wonder at Johnson's displeasure when the name of Dr. Priestley was mentioned; for I know no writer who has been suffered to publish more pernicious doctrines. I shall instance only three. First, *Materialism*; by which *mind* is denied to human nature; which, if believed, must deprive us of every elevated prin-

1783. Ætat. 74. answered, 'Sir, because we are indebted to him for these important discoveries.' On this Dr. Johnson

ciple. Secondly, *Necessity*; or the doctrine that every action, whether good or bad, is included in an unchangeable and unavoidable system; a notion utterly subversive of moral government. Thirdly, that we have no reason to think that the *future* world, (which, as he is pleased to *inform* us, will be adapted to our *merely improved* nature,) will be materially different from *this*; which, if believed, would sink wretched mortals into despair, as they could no longer hope for the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," or for that happiness which is revealed to us as something beyond our present conceptions; but would feel themselves doomed to a continuation of the uneasy state under which they now groan. I say nothing of the petulant intemperance with which he dares to insult the venerable establishments of his country.

As a specimen of his writings, I shall quote the following passage, which appears to me equally absurd and impious, and which might have been retorted upon him by the men who were prosecuted for burning his house. "I cannot, (says he,) as a *necessarian*, [meaning *necessitarian*,] hate *any man*; because I consider him as *being*, in all respects, just what God has *made him to be*; and also as *doing with respect to me*, nothing but what he was *expressly designed* and *appointed* to do: God being the *only cause*, and men nothing more than the *instruments* in his hands to *execute all his pleasure*.'—Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity, p. 111.

The Reverend Dr. Parr, in a late tract, appears to suppose that *Dr. Johnson not only endured, but almost solicited, an interview with Dr. Priestley*. In justice to Dr. Johnson, I declare my firm belief that he never did. My illustrious friend was particularly resolute in not giving countenance to men whose writings he considered as pernicious to society. I was present at Oxford when Dr. Price, even before he had rendered himself so generally obnoxious by his zeal for the French revolution, came into a company where Johnson was, who instantly left the room. Much more would he have reprobated Dr. Priestley.

Whoever wishes to see a perfect delineation of this *Literary Jack of all Trades*, may find it in an ingenious track, entitled, "A Small Whole-Length of Dr. Priestley," printed for Rivingtons in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

appeared well content; and replied, 'Well, well, I believe we are; and let every man have the honour he has merited.' 1783. Ætat. 74.

"A friend was one day, about two years before his death, struck with some instance of Dr. Johnson's great candour. 'Well, Sir, (said he,) I will always say that you are a very candid man.'—'Will you, (replied the Doctor,) I doubt then you will be very singular. But, indeed, Sir, (continued he,) I look upon myself to be a man very much misunderstood. I am not an uncandid, nor am I a severe man. I sometimes say more than I mean, in jest; and people are apt to believe me serious: however, I am more candid than I was when I was younger. As I know more of mankind, I expect ess of them, and am ready now to call a man *a good man*, upon easier terms than I was formerly."

On his return from Heale he wrote to Dr. Burney.—"I came home on the 18th of September, at noon, to a very disconsolate house. You and I have lost our friends; but you have more friends at home. My domestick companion is taken from me. She is much missed, for her acquisitions were many, and her curiosity universal; so that she partook of every conversation. I am not well enough to go much out; and to sit, and eat, or fast alone, is very wearisome. I always mean to send my compliments to all the ladies."

His fortitude and patience met with severe trials during this year. The stroke of the palsy has been related circumstantially; but he was also afflicted with the gout, and was besides troubled with a complaint which not only was attended with immediate

1783. Ætat. 74. inconvenience, but threatened him with a chirurgical operation, from which most men would shrink. The complaint was a *sarcocele*, which Johnson bore with uncommon firmness, and was not at all frightened while he looked forward to amputation. He was attended by Mr. Pott and Mr. Cruikshank. I have before me a letter of the 30th of July this year, to Mr. Cruikshank, in which he says, " I am going to put myself into your hands:" and another, accompanying a set of his " Lives of the Poets," in which he says, " I beg your acceptance of these volumes, as an acknowledgement of the great favours which you have bestowed on, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant." I have in my possession several more letters from him to Mr. Cruikshank, and also to Dr. Mudge at Plymouth, which it would be improper to insert, as they are filled with unpleasing technical details. I shall, however, extract from his letters to Dr. Mudge such passages as shew either a felicity of expression or the undaunted state of his mind.

" My conviction of your skill, and my belief of your friendship, determine me to intreat your opinion and advice."—" In this state I with great earnestness desire you to tell me what is to be done. Excision is doubtless necessary to the cure, and I know not any means of palliation. The operation is doubtless painful; but is it dangerous? The pain I hope to endure with decency; but I am loth to put life into much hazard."—" By representing the gout as an antagonist to the palsy, you have said enough to make it welcome. This is not strictly the first fit, but I hope it is as good as the first; for it is the second that ever confined me; and the first was ten

years ago, much less fierce and fiery than this."— "Write, dear Sir, what you can to inform or encourage me. The operation is not delayed by any fears or objections of mine." 1783. Ætat. 74.

"TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"You may very reasonably charge me with insensibility of your kindness, and that of lady Rothes, since I have suffered so much time to pass without paying any acknowledgement. I now, at last, return my thanks; and why I did it not sooner I ought to tell you. I went into Wiltshire as soon as I well could, and was there much employed in palliating my own malady. Disease produces much selfishness. A man in pain is looking after ease; and lets most other things go as chance shall dispose of them. In the mean time I have lost a companion,[a] to whom I have had recourse for domestick amusement for thirty years, and whose variety of knowledge never was exhausted; and now return to a habitation vacant and desolate. I carry about a very troublesome and dangerous complaint, which admits no cure but by the chirurgical knife. Let me have your prayers. I am, &c.

"London, Sept. 29, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Happily the complaint abated without his being put to the torture of amputation. But we must surely admire the manly resolution which he discovered, while it hung over him.

[a] Mrs. Anna Williams.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

1783. Ætat. 74. In a letter to the same gentleman he writes, "The gout has within these four days come upon me with a violence which I never experienced before. It made me helpless as an infant."—And in another, having mentioned Mrs. Williams, he says,—"whose death following that of Levett, has now made my house a solitude. She left her little substance to a charity-school. She is, I hope, where there is neither darkness, nor want, nor sorrow."

I wrote to him, begging to know the state of his health, and mentioned that "Baxter's Anacreon, which is in the library at Auchinleck, was, I find, collated by my father in 1727, with the MS. belonging to the University of Leyden, and he has made a number of Notes upon it. Would you advise me to publish a new edition of it?"

His answer was dated September 30.—"You should not make your letters such rarities, when you know, or might know, the uniform state of my health. It is very long since I heard from you; and that I have not answered is a very insufficient reason for the silence of a friend.—Your Anacreon is a very uncommon book; neither London nor Cambridge can supply a copy of that edition. Whether it should be reprinted, you cannot do better than consult Lord Hailes.—Besides my constant and radical disease, I have been for these ten days much harassed with the gout; but that has now remitted. I hope God will yet grant me a little longer life, and make me less unfit to appear before him."

He this autumn received a visit from the celebrated Mrs. Siddons. He gives this account of it in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale [October 27]:—"Mrs. Siddons, in her visit to me, behaved with

great modesty and propriety, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her. I shall be glad to see her again. Her brother Kemble calls on me, and pleases me very well. Mrs. Siddons and I talked of plays; and she told me her intention of exhibiting this winter the characters of Constance, Catharine, and Isabella, in Shakspeare." 1783. Ætat. 74.

Mr. Kemble has favoured me with the following minute of what passed at this visit.

"When Mrs. Siddons came into the room, there happened to be no chair ready for her, which he observing, said with a smile, 'Madam, you who so often occasion a want of seats to other people, will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself.'

"Having placed himself by her, he with great good humour entered upon a consideration of the English drama; and, among other enquiries, particularly asked her which of Shakspeare's characters she was most pleased with. Upon her answering that she thought the character of Queen Catharine, in Henry the Eighth, the most natural:—'I think so too, Madam, (said he;) and whenever you perform it, I will once more hobble out to the theatre myself.' Mrs. Siddons promised she would do herself the honour of acting his favourite part for him; but many circumstances happened to prevent the representation of King Henry the Eighth during the Doctor's life.

"In the course of the evening he thus gave his opinion upon the merits of some of the principal performers whom he remembered to have seen upon the stage. 'Mrs. Porter, in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive in the sprightliness of humour, I have

1783. Ætat. 74. never seen equalled. What Clive did best, she did better than Garrick; but could not do half so many things well; she was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature.—Pritchard, in common life was a vulgar ideot; she would talk of her *gownd*; but, when she appeared upon the stage, seemed to be inspired by gentility and understanding.—I once talked with Colley Cibber, and thought him ignorant of the principles of his art.—Garrick, Madam, was no declaimer; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken *To be, or not to be*, better than he did; yet he was the only actor I ever saw, whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy; though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguished excellencies.' Having expatiated, with his usual force and eloquence, on Mr. Garrick's extraordinary eminence as an actor, he concluded with this compliment to his social talents; 'And after all, Madam, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table."

Johnson, indeed, had thought more upon the subject of acting than might be generally supposed. Talking of it one day to Mr. Kemble, he said, "Are you, Sir, one of those enthusiasts who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?" Upon Mr. Kemble's answering—that he had never felt so strong a persuasion himself; "To be sure not, Sir, (said Johnson;) the thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster, Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it."[9]

[9] My worthy friend, Mr. John Nichols, was present when Mr. Henderson, the actor, paid a visit to Dr. Johnson; and was re-

[TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"DEAR MADAM,

"THE death of poor Mr. Porter, of which your maid has sent an account, must have very much surprised you. The death of a friend is almost always unexpected: we do not love to think of it, and therefore are not prepared for its coming. He was, I think, a religious man, and therefore that his end was happy.

"Death has likewise visited my mournful habitation. Last month died Mrs. Williams, who had been to me for thirty years in the place of a sister: her knowledge was great, and her conversation pleasing. I now live in cheerless solitude.

ceived in a very courteous manner,—See "Gentleman's Magazine." June 1791.

I found among Dr. Johnson's papers, the following letter to him, from the celebrated Mrs. Bellamy:

"TO DR. JOHNSON.

"SIR,

"The flattering remembrance of the partiality you honoured me with, some years ago, as well as the humanity you are known to possess, has encouraged me to solicit your patronage at my Benefit.

"By a long Chancery suit, and a complicated train of unfortunate events, I am reduced to the greatest distress; which obliges me, once more, to request the indulgence of the publick.

"Give me leave to solicit the honour of your company, and to assure you, if you grant my request, the gratification I shall feel, from being patronized by Dr. Johnson, will be infinitely superiour to any advantage that may arise from the Benefit; as I am, with the profoundest respect, Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"No. 10, Duke-street, St. James's, "G. A. BELLAMY."
May 11, 1783.

I am happy in recording these particulars, which prove that my illustrious friend lived to think much more favourably of Players than he appears to have done in the early part of his life.

1783. Ætat. 74. "My two last years have past under the pressure of successive diseases. I have lately had the gout with some severity. But I wonderfully escaped the operation which I mentioned, and am upon the whole restored to health beyond my own expectation.

"As we daily see our friends die round us, we that are left must cling closer, and, if we can do nothing more, at least pray for one another; and remember, that as others die we must die too, and prepare ourselves diligently for the last great trial. I am, Madam,

"Yours affectionately,

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street, Nov. 10, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."]

A pleasing instance of the generous attention of one of his friends has been discovered by the publication of Mrs. Thrale's collection of Letters. In a letter to one of the Miss Thrales,[1] he writes, "A friend, whose name I will tell when your mamma has tried to guess it, sent to my physician to enquire whether this long train of illness had brought me into difficulties for want of money, with an invitation to send to him for what occasion required. I shall write this night to thank him, having no need to borrow." And afterwards, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, "Since you cannot guess, I will tell you, that the generous man was Gerard Hamilton. I returned him a very thankful and respectful letter."[2]

I applied to Mr. Hamilton, by a common friend, and he has been so obliging as to let me have Johnson's letter to him upon this occasion, to adorn my collection.

[1] Vol. II. p. 328. [2] Ibid. p. 342.

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON.

"DEAR SIR,

"YOUR kind enquiries after my affairs, and your generous offers, have been communicated to me by Dr. Brocklesby. I return thanks with great sincerity, having lived long enough to know what gratitude is due to such friendship; and entreat that my refusal may not be imputed to sullenness or pride. I am, indeed, in no want. Sickness is, by the generosity of my physicians, of little expence to me. But if any unexpected exigence should press me, you shall see, dear Sir, how cheerfully I can be obliged to so much liberality.

"I am, Sir,
"Your most obedient
"And most humble servant,

"November 19, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

I find in this, as in former years, notices of his kind attention to Mrs. Gardiner, who, though in the humble station of a tallow-chandler upon Snow-hill, was a woman of excellent good sense, pious, and charitable.[3] She told me, she had been introduced to him by Mrs. Masters, the poetess, whose volumes he revised, and, it is said, illuminated here and there with a ray of his own genius. Mrs. Gardiner was very zealous for the support of the Ladies' charity-school, in the parish of St. Sepulchre. It is confined to females; and, I am told, it afforded a hint for the story of *Betty Broom* in "The Idler." Johnson this

[3] [In his Will Dr. Johnson left her a book "at her election, to keep as a token of remembrance." M.]

[This excellent woman died September 13, 1789, aged 74. A. C.]

1783. Ætat. 74. year, I find, obtained for it a sermon from the late Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Shipley, whom he, in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, characterises as "knowing and conversible;" and whom all who knew his Lordship, even those who differed from him in politicks, remember with much respect.

The Earl of Carlisle having written a tragedy, entitled "THE FATHER'S REVENGE," some of his Lordship's friends applied to Mrs. Chapone, to prevail on Dr. Johnson to read and give his opinion of it, which he accordingly did, in a letter to that lady. Sir Joshua Reynolds having informed me that this letter was in Lord Carlisle's possession, though I was not fortunate enough to have the honour of being known to his Lordship, trusting to the general courtesy of literature, I wrote to him, requesting the favour of a copy of it, and to be permitted to insert it in my life of Dr. Johnson. His Lordship was so good as to comply with my request, and has thus enabled me to enrich my work with a very fine piece of writing, which displays both the critical skill and politeness of my illustrious friend; and perhaps the curiosity which it will excite, may induce the noble and elegant Authour to gratify the world by the publication[4] of a performance, of which Dr. Johnson has spoken in such terms.

"TO MRS. CHAPONE.

"MADAM,

"BY sending the tragedy to me a second time,[5] I think that a very honourable distinction has been

[4] A few copies only of this tragedy have been printed, and given to the authour's friends.

[5] Dr. Johnson having been very ill when the tragedy was first sent to him, had declined the consideration of it.

shewn me, and I did not delay the perusal, of which I am now to tell the effect. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"The construction of the play is not completely regular; the stage is too often vacant, and the scenes are not sufficiently connected. This, however, would be called by Dryden only a mechanical defect; which takes away little from the power of the poem, and which is seen rather than felt.

"A rigid examiner of the diction might, perhaps, wish some words changed, and some lines more vigorously terminated. But from such petty imperfections what writer was ever free?

"The general form and force of the dialogue is of more importance. It seems to want that quickness of reciprocation which characterises the English drama, and is not always sufficiently fervid or animated.

"Of the sentiments, I remember not one that I wished omitted. In the imagery I cannot forbear to distinguish the comparison of joy succeeding grief to light rushing on the eye accustomed to darkness. It seems to have all that can be desired to make it please. It is new, just, and delightful.[6]

"With the characters, either as conceived or preserved, I have no fault to find; but was much inclined to congratulate a writer, who, in defiance of prejudice and fashion, made the Archbishop a good man, and scorned all thoughtless applause, which a vicious churchman would have brought him.

[6] "I could have born my woes; that stranger Joy
"Wounds while it smiles:—The long-imprison'd wretch,
"Emerging from the night of his damp cell,
"Shrinks from the sun's bright beams; and that which flings
"Gladness o'er all, to him is agony."

1783. Ætat. 74. "The catastrophe is affecting. The Father and Daughter both culpable, both wretched, and both penitent, divide between them our pity and our sorrow.

"Thus, Madam, I have performed what I did not willingly undertake, and could not decently refuse. The noble writer will be pleased to remember that sincere criticism ought to raise no resentment, because judgement is not under the controul of will; but involuntary criticism, as it has still less of choice, ought to be more remote from possibility of offence.

"I am, &c.

"Nov. 28, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

I consulted him on two questions of a very different nature: one, whether the unconstitutional influence exercised by the Peers of Scotland in the election of the representatives of the Commons, by means of fictitious qualifications, ought not to be resisted;—the other, What in propriety and humanity, should be done with old horses unable to labour. I gave him some account of my life at Auchinleck; and expressed my satisfaction that the gentlemen of the county had, at two publick meetings, elected me their *Præses*, or Chairman.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"LIKE all other men who have great friends, you begin to feel the pangs of neglected merit; and all the comfort that I can give you is, by telling you

that you have probably more pangs to feel, and more neglect to suffer. You have, indeed, begun to complain too soon; and I hope I am the only confidant of your discontent. Your friends have not yet had leisure to gratify personal kindness; they have hitherto been busy in strengthening their ministerial interest. If a vacancy happens in Scotland, give them early intelligence: and as you can serve Government as powerfully as any of your probable competitors, you may make in some sort a warrantable claim. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"Of the exaltations and depressions of your mind you delight to talk, and I hate to hear. Drive all such fancies from you.

"On the day when I received your letter, I think, the foregoing page was written; to which one disease or another has hindered me from making any additions. I am now a little better. But sickness and solitude press me very heavily. I could bear sickness better, if I were relieved from solitude.

"The present dreadful confusion of the publick ought to make you wrap yourself up in your hereditary possessions, which, though less than you may wish, are more than you can want; and in an hour of religious retirement return thanks to God, who has exempted you from any strong temptation to faction, treachery, plunder, and disloyalty.

"As your neighbours distinguish you by such honours as they can bestow, content yourself with your station, without neglecting your profession. Your estate and the Courts will find you full employment; and your mind well occupied will be quiet.

"The usurpation of the nobility, for they apparently usurp all the influence they gain by fraud

1783. Ætat. 74. and misrepresentation, I think it certainly lawful, perhaps your duty, to resist. What is not their own, they have only by robbery.

Your question about the horses gives me more perplexity. I know not well what advice to give you. I can only recommend a rule which you do not want;—give as little pain as you can. I suppose that we have a right to their service while their strength lasts; what we can do with them afterwards, I cannot so easily determine. But let us consider. Nobody denies, that man has a right first to milk the cow, and to sheer the sheep, and then to kill them for his table. May he not, by parity of reason, first work a horse, and then kill him the easiest way, that he may have the means of another horse, or food for cows and sheep? Man is influenced in both cases by different motives of self-interest. He that rejects the one must reject the other.

"I am, &c.

"London, Dec. 24, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"A happy and pious Christmas; and many happy years to you, your lady, and children."

The late ingenious Mr. Mickle, some time before his death, wrote me a letter concerning Dr. Johnson, in which he mentions, "I was upwards of twelve years acquainted with him, was frequently in his company, always talked with ease to him, and can truly say, that I never received from him one rough word."

In this letter he relates his having, while engaged in translating the Lusiad, had a dispute of considerable length with Johnson, who, as usual declaimed

upon the misery and corruption of a sea life, and used this expression:—"It had been happy for the world, Sir, if your hero Gama, Prince Henry of Portugal, and Columbus, had never been born, or that their schemes had never gone farther than their own imaginations."—"This sentiment, (says Mr. Mickle,) which is to be found in his 'Introduction to the World displayed,' I, in my Dissertation prefixed to the Lusiad, have controverted; and though authours are said to be bad judges of their own works, I am not ashamed to own to a friend, that that dissertation is my favourite above all that I ever attempted in prose. Next year, when the Lusiad was published, I waited on Dr. Johnson, who addressed me with one of his good-humoured smiles:—'Well, you have remembered our dispute about Prince Henry, and have cited me too. You have done your part very well indeed: you have made the best of your argument; but I am not convinced yet.' 1783. Ætat. 74.

"Before publishing the Lusiad, I sent Mr. Hoole a proof of that part of the introduction, in which I make mention of Dr. Johnson, yourself, and other well-wishers to the work, begging it might be shewn to Dr. Johnson. This was accordingly done; and in place of the simple mention of him which I had made, he dictated to Mr. Hoole the sentence as it now stands.

"Dr. Johnson told me in 1772, that, about twenty years before that time, he himself had a design to translate the Lusiad, of the merit of which he spoke highly, but had been prevented by a number of other engagements."

Mr. Mickle reminds me in this letter, of a conversation at dinner one day at Mr. Hoole's with Dr.

1783. Ætat. 74. Johnson, when Mr. Nicol the King's Bookseller, and I, attempted to controvert the maxim, "better that ten guilty should escape, than one innocent person suffer;" and were answered by Dr. Johnson with great power of reasoning and eloquence. I am very sorry that I have no record of that day: but I well recollect my illustrious friend's having ably shewn that unless civil institutions ensure protection to the innocent, all the confidence which mankind should have in them would be lost.

I shall here mention what, in strict chronological arrangement, should have appeared in my account of last year; but may more properly be introduced here, the controversy having not been closed till this. The Reverend Mr. Shaw, a native of one of the Hebrides, having entertained doubts of the authenticity of the poems ascribed to Ossian, divested himself of national bigotry; and having travelled in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and also in Ireland, in order to furnish himself with materials for a Gaelick Dictionary, which he afterwards compiled, was so fully satisfied that Dr. Johnson was in the right upon the question, that he candidly published a pamphlet, stating his conviction, and the proofs and reasons on which it was founded. A person at Edinburgh, of the name of Clark, answered this pamphlet with much zeal, and much abuse of its authour. Johnson took Mr. Shaw under his protection, and gave him his assistance in writing a reply, which has been admired by the best judges, and by many been considered as conclusive. A few paragraphs, which sufficiently mark their great Authour, shall be selected.

"My assertions are, for the most part, purely negative: I deny the existence of Fingal, because in a

long and curious peregrination through the Gaelick regions I have never been able to find it. What I could not see myself I suspect to be equally invisible to others; and I suspect with the more reason, as among all those who have seen it no man can shew it. 1783. Ætat. 74.

"Mr. Clark compares the obstinacy of those who disbelieve the genuineness of Ossian to a blind man, who should dispute the reality of colours, and deny that the British troops are cloathed in red. The blind man's doubt would be rational, if he did not know by experience that others have a power which he himself wants: but what perspicacity has Mr. Clark which Nature has withheld from me or the rest of mankind?

"The true state of the parallel must be this. Suppose a man, with eyes like his neighbours, was told by a boasting corporal, that the troops, indeed, wore red clothes for their ordinary dress, but that every soldier had likewise a suit of black velvet, which he put on when the King reviews them. This he thinks strange, and desires to see the fine clothes, but finds nobody in forty thousand men that can produce either coat or waistcoat. One, indeed, has left them in his chest at Port Mahon; another has always heard that he ought to have velvet clothes somewhere; and a third has heard somebody say, that soldiers ought to wear velvet. Can the enquirer be blamed if he goes away believing that a soldier's red coat is all that he has?

"But the most obdurate incredulity may be shamed or silenced by facts. To overpower contradictions, let the soldier shew his velvet coat, and the Fingalist the original of Ossian.

1783. Ætat. 74. "The difference between us and the blind man is this: the blind man is unconvinced, because he cannot see; and we, because, though we can see, we find that nothing can be shown."

Notwithstanding the complication of disorders under which Johnson now laboured, he did not resign himself to despondency and discontent, but with wisdom and spirit endeavoured to console and amuse his mind with as many innocent enjoyments as he could procure. Sir John Hawkins has mentioned the cordiality with which he insisted that such of the members of the old club in Ivy-lane as survived, should meet again and dine together, which they did, twice at a tavern, and once at his house: and in order to ensure himself society in the evening for three days in the week, he instituted a club at the Essex Head, in Essex-street, then kept by Samuel Greaves, an old servant of Mr. Thrale's.

"TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT is inconvenient to me to come out; I should else have waited on you with an account of a little evening Club which we are establishing in Essex-street, in the Strand, and of which you are desired to be one. It will be held at the Essex Head, now kept by an old servant of Thrale's. The company is numerous, and, as you will see by the list, miscellaneous. The terms are lax, and the expences light. Mr. Barry was adopted by Dr. Brocklesby, who joined with me in forming the plan. We meet thrice a week, and he who misses forfeits two-pence.

"If you are willing to become a member, draw a line under your name. Return the list. We meet for the first time on Monday at eight. 1783. Ætat 74.

"I am, &c.

"Dec. 4, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

It did not suit Sir Joshua to be one of this Club. But when I mention only Mr. Daines Barrington, Dr. Brocklesby, Mr. Murphy, Mr. John Nichols, Mr. Cooke, Mr. Joddrel, Mr. Paradise, Dr. Horsley, Mr. Windham,[6] I shall sufficiently obviate the misrepresentation of it by Sir John Hawkins, as if it had been a low ale-house association, by which Johnson was degraded. Johnson himself, like his namesake Old Ben, composed the Rules of his Club.[7]

[6] I was in Scotland when this Club was founded, and during all the winter. Johnson, however, declared I should be a member, and invented a word upon the occasion: "Boswell, (said he) is a very *clubable* man." When I came to town, I was proposed by Mr. Barrington, and chosen. I believe there are few societies where there is better conversation or more decorum. Several of us resolved to continue it after our great founder was removed by death. Other members were added; and now, above eight years since that loss, we go on happily.

[7] RULES.

"To-day deep thoughts with me resolve to drench
"In mirth, which after no repenting draws."—MILTON.

"The Club shall consist of four-and-twenty.

"The meetings shall be on the Monday, Thursday, and Saturday of every week; but in the week before Easter there shall be no meeting.

"Every member is at liberty to introduce a friend once a week, but not oftener.

"Two members shall oblige themselves to attend in their turn every night from eight to ten, or to procure two to attend in their room.

"Every member present at the Club shall spend at least six-

1783. In the end of this year he was seized with a spasmodick asthma of such violence, that he was confined to the house in great pain, being sometimes obliged to sit all night in his chair, a recumbent posture being so hurtful to his respiration, that he could not endure lying in bed; and there came upon him at the same time that oppressive and fatal disease, a dropsy. It was a very severe winter, which proba-

Ætat. 74.

pence; and every member who stays away shall forfeit threepence.

"The master of the house shall keep an account of the absent members: and deliver to the President of the night a list of the forfeits incurred.

"When any member returns after absence, he shall immediately lay down his forfeits; which if he omits to do, the President shall require.

"There shall be no general reckoning, but every man shall adjust his own expences.

"The night of indispensable attendance will come to every member once a month. Whoever shall for three months together omit to attend himself, or by substitution, nor shall make any apology in the fourth month, shall be considered as having abdicated the Club.

"When a vacancy is to be filled, the name of the candidate, and of the member recommending him, shall stand in the Club-room three nights. On the fourth he may be chosen by ballot; six members at least being present, and two-thirds of the ballot being in his favour; or the majority, should the numbers not be divisible by three.

"The master of the house shall give notice, six days before, to each of those members whose turn of necessary attendance is come.

"The notice may be in these words:—'Sir, On —— the —— of ——, will be your turn of presiding at the Essex-Head. Your company is therefore earnestly requested.'

"One penny shall be left by each member for the waiter."

Johnson's definition of a Club in this sense, in his Dictionary, is, "An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions."

bly aggravated his complaints; and the solitude in which Mr. Levett and Mrs. Williams had left him, rendered his life very gloomy. Mrs. Desmoulins, who still lived, was herself so very ill, that she could contribute very little to his relief. He, however, had none of that unsocial shyness which we commonly see in people afflicted with sickness. He did not hide his head from the world, in solitary abstraction; he did not deny himself to the visits of his friends and acquaintances; but at all times, when he was not overcome by sleep, was ready for conversation as in his best days.

1783 Ætat. 74.

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER IN LICHFIELD.

"DEAR MADAM,

"You may perhaps think me negligent that I have not written to you again upon the loss of your brother; but condolences and consolations are such common and such useless things, that the omission of them is no great crime: and my own diseases occupy my mind, and engage my care. My nights are miserably restless, and my days, therefore, are heavy. I try, however, to hold up my head as high as I can.

"I am sorry that your health is impaired; perhaps the spring and the summer may, in some degree, restore it; but if not, we must submit to the inconveniencies of time, as to the other dispensations of Eternal Goodness. Pray for me, and write to me, or let Mr. Pearson write for you.

"I am, &c.

"London, Nov. 29, 1783. "SAM. JOHNSON."

And now I am arrived at the last year of the life of SAMUEL JOHNSON, a year in which, although passed in severe indisposition, he nevertheless gave many evi-

1784. Ætat. 75. dences of the continuance of those wonderous powers of mind, which raised him so high in the intellectual world. His conversation and his letters of this year were in no respect inferiour to those of former years.

The following is a remarkable proof of his being alive to the most minute curiosities of literature.

"TO MR. DILLY, BOOKSELLER, IN THE POULTRY.

"SIR,

"THERE is in the world a set of books which used to be sold by the booksellers on the bridge, and which I must entreat you to procure me. They are called, *Burton's Books*;[8] the title of one is *Admirable Curiosities, Rarities, and Wonders in England.* I believe there are about five or six of them; they seem very proper to allure backward readers; be so kind as to get them for me, and send me them with the best printed edition of 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted.'

"I am, &c.

"Jan. 6, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MR. PERKINS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I WAS very sorry not to see you when you were

[8] [The following list comprises several of these books; but probably is incomplete:

1. Historical Remarques on London and Westminster.... 1681
2. Wars in England, Scotland, and Ireland............ 1681
3. Wonderful Prodigies.............................. 1681
4. English Empire in America........................ 1685
5. Surprising Miracles of Nature and Art. 1685
7. History of Scotland and Ireland..................... 1685
8. Nine Worthies of the World......................... 1687
9. The English Hero, or Sir Francis Drake............ 1687
10. Memorable Accidents, and unheard-of Transactions.. 1693
11. History of Oliver Cromwell......................... 1698
12. Unparalleled Varieties 1699

M.]

so kind as to call on me; but to disappoint friends, and if they are not very good-natured, to disoblige them, is one of the evils of sickness. If you will please to let me know which of the afternoons in this week I shall be favoured with another visit by you and Mrs. Perkins, and the young people, I will take all the measures that I can to be pretty well at that time. I am, dear Sir, 1784. Ætat. 75.

"Your most humble servant,

"Jan. 21, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

His attention to the Essex-head Club appears from the following letter to Mr. Alderman Clark, a gentleman for whom he deservedly entertained a great regard.

"TO RICHARD CLARK, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"You will receive a requisition, according to the rules of the Club, to be at the house as President of the night. This turn comes once a month, and the member is obliged to attend, or send another in his place. You were enrolled in the Club by my invitation, and I ought to introduce you; but as I am hindered by sickness, Mr. Hoole will very properly supply my place as introductor, or yours as President. I hope in milder weather to be a very constant attendant.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"Jan. 27, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"You ought to be informed that the forfeits began with the year, and that every night of non-attendance incurs the mulct of three-pence, that is, nine-pence a week."

On the 8th of January I wrote to him, anxiously enquiring as to his health, and enclosing my "Letter

1784. to the People of Scotland, on the present state of the nation."—"I trust, (said I,) that you will be liberal
Ætat. 75. enough to make allowance for my differing from you on two points, [the Middlesex Election, and the American War,] when my general principles of government are according to your own heart, and when, at a crisis of doubtful event, I stand forth with honest zeal as an ancient and faithful Briton. My reason for introducing those two points was, that as my opinions with regard to them had been declared at the periods when they were least favourable, I might have the credit of a man who is not a worshipper of ministerial power."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HEAR of many enquiries which your kindness has disposed you to make after me. I have long intended you a long letter, which perhaps the imagination of its length hindered me from beginning. I will, therefore, content myself with a shorter.

"Having promoted the institution of a new Club in the neighbourhood, at the house of an old servant of Thrale's, I went thither to meet the company, and was seized with a spasmodick asthma, so violent, that with difficulty I got to my own house, in which I have been confined eight or nine weeks, and from which I know not when I shall be able to go even to church. The asthma, however, is not the worst. A dropsy gains ground upon me; my legs and thighs are very much swollen with water, which I should be content if I could keep there, but I am afraid that it will soon be higher. My nights are very sleepless and very tedious. And yet I am extremely afraid of

dying.

"My physicians try to make me hope, that much of my malady is the effect of cold, and that some degree at least of recovery is to be expected from vernal breezes and summer suns. If my life is prolonged to autumn, I should be glad to try a warmer climate; though how to travel with a diseased body, without a companion to conduct me, and with very little money, I do not well see. Ramsay has recovered his limbs in Italy; and Fielding was sent to Lisbon, where, indeed, he died; but he was, I believe, past hope when he went. Think for me what I can do. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"I received your pamphlet, and when I write again may perhaps tell you some opinion about it; but you will forgive a man struggling with disease his neglect of disputes, politicks, and pamphlets. Let me have your prayers. My compliments to your lady, and young ones. Ask your physicians about my case: and desire Sir Alexander Dick to write me his opinion.

"I am, dear Sir, &c.

"Feb. 11, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"I HAVE been extremely ill of an asthma and dropsy, but received by the mercy of GOD, sudden, and unexpected relief last Thursday, by the discharge of twenty pints of water. Whether I shall continue free, or shall fill again, cannot be told. Pray for me.

"Death, my dear, is very dreadful; let us think nothing worth our care but how to prepare for it; what we know amiss in ourselves let us make haste to amend, and put our trust in the mercy of GOD,

1784. Ætat. 75. and the intercession of our SAVIOUR. I am, dear Madam,

"Your most humble servant,

"Feb. 23, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE just advanced so far towards recovery as to read a pamphlet; and you may reasonably suppose that the first pamphlet which I read was yours. I am very much of your opinion, and, like you, feel great indignation at the indecency with which the King is every day treated. Your paper contains very considerable knowledge of history and of the constitution, very properly produced and applied. It will certainly raise your character,[9] though perhaps it may not make you a Minister of State.

* * * * * *

"I desire you to see Mrs. Stewart once again, and tell her, that in the letter-case was a letter relating to me, for which I will give her, if she is willing to give it me, another guinea. The letter is of consequence only to me.

"I am, dear Sir, &c.

"London, Feb. 27, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[9] I sent it to Mr. Pitt, with a letter, in which I thus expressed myself: "My principles may appear to you too monarchical: but I know and am persuaded, they are not inconsistent with the true principles of liberty. Be this as it may, you, Sir, are now the Prime Minister, called by the Sovereign to maintain the right of the Crown, as well as those of the people, against a violent faction. As such, you are entitled to the warmest support of every good subject in every department." He answered, "I am extremely obliged to you for the sentiments you do me the honour to express, and have observed with great pleasure the *zealous and able support* given to the CAUSE OF THE PUBLICK in the work you were so good to transmit to me."

In consequence of Johnson's request that I should ask our physicians about his case, and desire Sir Alexander Dick to send his opinion, I transmitted him a letter from that very amiable Baronet, then in his eighty-first year, with his faculties as entire as ever: and mentioned his expressions to me in the note accompanying it,—"With my most affectionate wishes for Dr. Johnson's recovery, in which his friends, his country, and all mankind have so deep a stake;" and at the same time a full opinion upon his case by Dr. Gillespie, who, like Dr. Cullen, had the advantage of having passed through the gradations of surgery and pharmacy, and by study and practice had attained to such skill, that my father settled on him two hundred pounds a year for five years, and fifty pounds a year during his life, as an *honorarium* to secure his particular attendance. The opinion was conveyed in a letter to me, beginning, "I am sincerely sorry for the bad state of health your very learned and illustrious friend, Dr. Johnson, labours under at present." 1784. Ætat 75.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"PRESENTLY after I had sent away my last letter, I received your kind medical packet. I am very much obliged both to you and to your physicians for your kind attention to my disease. Dr. Gillespie has sent me an excellent *consilium medicum*, all solid practical experimental knowledge. I am at present in the opinion of my physicians, (Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby,) as well as my own, going on very

1784. Ætat. 75. hopefully. I have just begun to take vinegar of squills. The powder hurt my stomach so much, that it could not be continued.

"Return Sir Alexander Dick my sincere thanks for his kind letter; and bring with you the rhubarb[1] which he so tenderly offers me.

"I hope dear Mrs. Boswell is now quite well, and that no evil, either real or imaginary, now disturbs you.

"I am, &c.

"London, March 2, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

I also applied to three of the eminent physicians who had chairs in our celebrated school of medicine at Edinburgh, Doctors Cullen, Hope, and Munro, to each of whom I sent the following letter:

"DEAR SIR,

"DR. JOHNSON has been very ill for some time; and in a letter of anxious apprehension he writes to me, 'Ask your physicians about my case.'

"This, you see, is not authority for a regular consultation: but I have no doubt of your readiness to give your advice to a man so eminent, and who, in his Life of Garth, has paid your profession a just and elegant compliment: "I believe every man has found in physicians great liberality and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusions of beneficence, and willingness to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre."

[1] From his garden at Prestonfield, where he cultivated that plant with such success, that he was presented with a gold medal by the Society of London for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

"Dr. Johnson is aged seventy-four. Last summer he had a stroke of the palsy, from which he recovered almost entirely. He had, before that, been troubled with a catarrhous cough. This winter he was seized with a spasmodick asthma, by which he has been confined to his house for about three months. Dr. Brocklesby writes to me, that upon the least admission of cold, there is such a constriction upon his breast, that he cannot lie down in his bed, but is obliged to sit up all night, and gets rest and sometimes sleep, only by means of laudanum and syrup of poppies; and that there are œdematous tumours in his legs and thighs. Dr. Brocklesby trusts a good deal to the return of mild weather. Dr. Johnson says, that a dropsy gains ground upon him; and he seems to think that a warmer climate would do him good. I understand he is now rather better, and is using vinegar of squills. I am, with great esteem, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"March 7, 1784. "JAMES BOSWELL."

All of them paid the most polite attention to my letter, and its venerable object. Dr. Cullen's words concerning him were, "It would give me the greatest pleasure to be of any service to a man whom the publick properly esteem, and whom I esteem and respect as much as I do Dr. Johnson." Dr. Hope's, "Few people have a better claim on me than your friend, as hardly a day passes that I do not ask his opinion about this or that word." Dr. Munro's, "I most sincerely join you in sympathising with that very worthy and ingenious character, from whom

1784. his country has derived much instruction and entertainment."
Ætat. 75.

Dr. Hope corresponded with his friend Dr. Blocklesby. Doctors Cullen and Munro wrote their opinions and prescriptions to me, which I afterwards carried with me to London, and, so far as they were encouraging, communicated to Johnson. The liberality on one hand, and grateful sense of it on the other, I have great satisfaction in recording.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM too much pleased with the attention which you and your dear lady[2] show to my welfare, not to be diligent in letting you know the progress which I make towards health. The dropsy, by GOD's blessing, has now run almost totally away by natural evacuation: and the asthma, if not irritated by cold, gives me little trouble. While I am writing this, I have not any sensation of debility or disease. But I do not yet venture out, having been confined to the house from the thirteenth of December, now a quarter of a year.

"When it will be fit for me to travel as far as Auchinleck, I am not able to guess; but such a letter as Mrs. Boswell's might draw any man, not wholly motionless, a great way. Pray tell the dear lady how much her civility and kindness have touched and gratified me.

"Our parliamentary tumults have now begun to subside, and the King's authority is in some measure

[2] Who had written him a very kind letter.

re-established. Mr. Pitt will have great power; but you must remember, that what he has to give, must, at least for some time, be given to those who gave, and those who preserve, his power. A new minister can sacrifice little to esteem or friendship; he must, till he is settled, think only of extending his interest. 1784. Ætat. 75.

* * * * * *

"If you come hither through Edinburgh, send for Mrs. Stewart, and give from me another guinea for the letter in the old case, to which I shall not be satisfied with my claim, till she gives it me.

"Please to bring with you Baxter's Anacreon; and if you procure heads of Hector Boece, the historian, and Arthur Johnston, the poet, I will put them in my room; or any other of the fathers of Scottish literature.

"I wish you an easy and happy journey, and hope I need not tell you that you will be welcome to, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

"London, March 18, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

I wrote to him, March 28, from York, informing him that I had a high gratification in the triumph of monarchical principles over aristocratical influence, in that great county, in an address to the King; that I was thus far on my way to him, but that news of the dissolution of Parliament having arrived, I was to hasten back to my own county, where I had carried an Address to his Majesty by a great majority, and had some intention of being a candidate to represent the county in Parliament.

1784. Ætat. 75.

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"You could do nothing so proper as to hasten back when you found the Parliament dissolved. With the influence which your address must have gained you, it may reasonably be expected that your presence will be of importance, and your activity of effect.

"Your solicitude for me gives me that pleasure which every man feels from the kindness of such a friend; and it is with delight I relieve it by telling, that Dr. Brocklesby's account is true, and that I am, by the blessing of GOD, wonderfully relieved.

"You are entering upon a transaction which requires much prudence. You must endeavour to oppose without exasperating; to practise temporary hostility, without producing enemies for life. This is, perhaps, hard to be done; yet it has been done by many, and seems most likely to be effected by opposing merely upon general principles, without descending to personal or particular censures or objections. One thing I must enjoin you, which is seldom observed in the conduct of elections;—I must entreat you to be scrupulous in the use of strong liquors. One night's drunkenness may defeat the labours of forty days well employed. Be firm, but not clamorous; be active, but not malicious; and you may form such an interest, as may not only exalt yourself, but dignify your family.

"We are, as you may suppose, all busy here. Mr. Fox resolutely stands for Westminster, and his friends say will carry the election. However that

be, he will certainly have a seat. Mr. Hoole has just told me, that the city leans towards the King. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"Let me hear, from time to time, how you are employed, and what progress you make.

"Make dear Mrs. Boswell, and all the young Boswells, the sincere compliments of, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"London, March 30, 1784. "Sam. Johnson."

To Mr. Langton he wrote with that cordiality which was suitable to the long friendship which had subsisted between him and that gentleman.

March 27. "Since you left me, I have continued in my own opinion, and in Dr. Brocklesby's, to grow better with respect to all my formidable and dangerous distempers; though to a body battered and shaken as mine has lately been, it is to be feared that weak attacks may be sometimes mischievous. I have, indeed, by standing carelessly at an open window, got a very troublesome cough, which it has been necessary to appease by opium, in larger quantities than I like to take, and I have not found it give way so readily as I expected; its obstinacy, however, seems at last disposed to submit to the remedy, and I know not whether I should then have a right to complain of any morbid sensation. My asthma is, I am afraid, constitutional and incurable; but it is only occasional, and unless it be excited by labour or by cold, gives me no molestation, nor does it lay very close siege to life; for Sir John Floyer, whom the physical race consider as authour of one of the best books upon it, panted on to ninety, as was supposed; and why were we content with supposing a fact so interesting, of a man so conspicu-

1784. ous? because he corrupted, at perhaps seventy or
Ætat. 75. eighty, the register, that he might pass for younger than he was. He was not much less than eighty, when to a man of rank who modestly asked his age, he answered, 'Go look;' though he was in general a man of civility and elegance.

"The ladies, I find, are at your house all well, except Miss Langton, who will probably soon recover her health by light suppers. Let her eat at dinner as she will, but not take a full stomach to bed.—Pay my sincere respects to dear Miss Langton in Lincolnshire, let her know that I mean not to break our league of friendship, and that I have a set of Lives for her, when I have the means of sending it."

April 8. "I am still disturbed by my cough; but what thanks have I not to pay, when my cough is the most painful sensation that I feel? and from that I expect hardly to be released, while winter continues to gripe us with so much pertinacity. The year has now advanced eighteen days beyond the equinox, and still there is very little remission of the cold. When warm weather comes, which surely must come at last, I hope it will help both me and your young lady.

"The man so busy about addresses is neither more nor less than our own Boswell, who had come as far as York towards London, but turned back on the dissolution, and is said now to stand for some place. Whether to wish him success, his best frends hesitate.

"Let me have your prayers for the completion of my recovery: I am now better than I ever expected to have been. May God add to his mercies

the grace that may enable me to use them according to his will. My compliments to all." 1784. Ætat. 75.

April 13. "I had this evening a note from Lord Portmore,[3] desiring that I would give you an account of my health. You might have had it with less circumduction. I am, by GOD's blessing, I believe free from all morbid sensations, except a cough, which is only troublesome. But I am still weak, and can have no great hope of strength till the weather shall be softer. The summer, if it be kindly, will, I hope, enable me to support the winter. GOD, who has so wonderfully restored me, can preserve me in all seasons.

"Let me enquire in my turn after the state of your family, great and little. I hope Lady Rothes and Miss Langton are both well. That is a good basis of content. Then how goes George on with his studies? How does Miss Mary? And how does my own Jenny? I think I owe Jenny a letter, which I will take care to pay. In the mean time tell her that I acknowledge the debt.

"Be pleased to make my compliments to the ladies. If Mrs. Langton comes to London, she will favour me with a visit, for I am not well enough to go out."

[3] To which Johnson returned this answer:

"TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL OF PORTMORE.

"DR. JOHNSON acknowledges with great respect the honour of Lord Portmore's notice. He is better than he was; and will, as his Lordship directs, write to Mr. Langton.

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
Apr. 13, 1784."

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

1784.
Ætat. 75.

"TO OZIAS HUMPHRY,[4] ESQ.

"SIR,

"MR. HOOLE has told me with what benevolence you listened to a request which I was almost afraid to make, of leave to a young painter[5] to attend you from time to time in your painting-room, to see your operations, and receive your instructions.

"The young man has perhaps good parts, but has been without a regular education. He is my god-son, and therefore I interest myself in his progress and success, and shall think myself much favoured if I receive from you a permission to send him.

"My health is, by GOD's blessing, much restored, but I am not yet allowed by my physicians to go

[4] The eminent painter, representative of the ancient family of Homfrey (now Humphry) in the west of England; who, as appears from their arms which they have invariably used, have been, (as I have seen authenticated by the best authority,) one of those among the Knights and Esquires of honour who are represented by Holinshed as having issued from the Tower of London on coursers apparalled for the justes, accompanied by ladies of honour, leading every one a Knight, with a chain of gold, passing through the streets of London into Smithfield, on Sunday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, being the first Sunday after Michaelmas, in the fourteenth year of King Richard the Second. This family once enjoyed large possessions, but, like others, have lost them in the progress of ages. Their blood, however, remains to them well ascertained; and they may hope in the revolution of events, to recover that rank in society for which, in modern times, fortune seems to be an indispensable requisite.

[5] Son of Mr. Samuel Paterson, eminent for his knowledge of books.

abroad; nor, indeed, do I think myself yet able to endure the weather. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"I am, Sir,
"Your most humble Servant,
"April 5, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

"THE bearer is my god-son, whom I take the liberty of recommending to your kindness; which I hope he will deserve by his respect to your excellence, and his gratitude for your favours.

"I am, Sir,
"Your most humble servant,
"April 10, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO THE SAME.

"SIR,

"I AM very much obliged by your civilities to my god-son, but must beg of you to add to them the favour of permitting him to see you paint, that he may know how a picture is begun, advanced, and completed.

"If he may attend you in a few of your operations, I hope he will shew that the benefit has been properly conferred, both by his proficiency and his gratitude. At least I shall consider you as enlarging your kindness to, Sir,

"Your humble servant,
"May 31, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

1784. Ætat. 75.

"TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR, ASHBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE.

"DEAR SIR,

"WHAT can be the reason that I hear nothing from you? I hope nothing disables you from writing. What I have seen, and what I have felt, gives me reason to fear every thing. Do not omit giving me the comfort of knowing, that after all my losses I have yet a friend left.

"I want every comfort. My life is very solitary and very cheerless. Though it has pleased GOD wonderfully to deliver me from the dropsy. I am yet very weak, and have not passed the door since the 13th of December. I hope for some help from warm weather, which will surely come in time.

"I could not have the consent of the physicians to go to church yesterday; I therefore received the holy sacrament at home, in the room where I communicated with dear Mrs. Williams, a little before her death. O! my friend, the approach of death is very dreadful. I am afraid to think on that which I know I cannot avoid. It is vain to look round and round for that help which cannot be had. Yet we hope and hope, and fancy that he who has lived to-day may live to-morrow. But let us learn to derive our hope only from GOD.

"In the mean time, let us be kind to one another. I have no friend now living but you[6] and Mr. Hector, that was the friend of my youth. Do not neglect, dear Sir, "Yours affectionately,

"London, Easter-Monday, April 12, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[6] [This friend of Johnson's youth survived him somewhat more than three years, having died Feb. 19, 1788. M.]

[TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"MY DEAR,

"I WRITE to you now, to tell you that I am so far recovered that on the 21st I went to church, to return thanks, after a confinement of more than four long months.

"My recovery is such as neither myself nor the physicians at all expected, and its such as that very few examples have been known of the like. Join with me, my dear love, in returning thanks to GOD.

"Dr. Vyse has been with [me] this evening: he tells me that you likewise have been much disordered, but that you are now better. I hope that we shall sometime have a cheerful interview. In the mean time let us pray for one another.

"I am, Madam,

"Your humble servant,

"London, April 26, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."]

What follows is a beautiful specimen of his gentleness and complacency to a young lady his god-child, one of the daughters of his friend Mr. Langton, then I think in her seventh year. He took the trouble to write it in a large round hand, nearly resembling printed characters, that she might have the satisfaction of reading it herself. The original lies before me, but shall be faithfully restored to her; and I dare say will be preserved by her as a jewel, as long as she lives.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

1784. Ætat. 75.

"TO MISS JANE LANGTON, IN ROCHESTER, KENT.

"MY DEAREST MISS JENNY,

"I AM sorry that your pretty letter has been so long without being answered; but, when I am not pretty well, I do not always write plain enough for young ladies. I am glad, my dear, to see that you write so well, and hope that you mind your pen, your book, and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected; and your needle will find you useful employment when you do not care to read. When you are a little older, I hope you will be very diligent in learning arithmetick; and, above all, that through your whole life you will carefully say your prayers, and read your Bible.

"I am, my dear,

"Your most humble servant,

"May 10, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On Wednesday, May 5, I arrived in London, and next morning had the pleasure to find Dr. Johnson greatly recovered. I but just saw him; for a coach was waiting to carry him to Islington, to the house of his friend the Reverend Mr. Strahan, where he went sometimes for the benefit of good air, which, notwithstanding his having formerly laughed at the general opinion upon the subject, he now acknowledged was conducive to health.

One morning afterwards, when I found him alone, he communicated to me, with solemn earnestness, a very remarkable circumstance which had happened in the course of his illness, when he was much dis-

tressed by the dropsy. He had shut himself up, and employed a day in particular exercises of religion,—fasting, humiliation, and prayer. On a sudden he obtained extraordinary relief, for which he looked up to Heaven with grateful devotion. He made no direct inference from this fact; but from his manner of telling it, I could perceive that it appeared to him as something more than an incident in the common course of events. For my own part, I have no difficulty to avow that cast of thinking, which, by many modern pretenders to wisdom, is called *superstitious*. But here I think even men of dry rationality may believe, that there was an intermediate interposition of divine Providence, and that "the fervent prayer of this righteous man" availed.[7]

1784. Ætat. 75.

On Sunday, May 9, I found Colonel Vallancy, the celebrated Antiquary, and Engineer of Ireland,

[7] Upon this subject there is a very fair and judicious remark in the Life of Dr. Abernethy, in the first edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, which I should have been glad to see in his Life which has been written for the second edition of that valuable work. "To deny the exercise of a particular providence in the Deity's government of the world, is certainly impious, yet nothing serves the cause of the scorner more than an incautious forward zeal in determining the particular instances of it."

In confirmation of my sentiments, I am also happy to quote that sensible and elegant writter Mr. *Melmoth*, in Letter VIII. of his collection, published under the name of *Fitzosborne*. "We may safely assert, that the belief of a particular Providence is founded upon such probable reasons as may well justify our assent. It would scarce, therefore, be wise to renounce an opinion which affords so firm a support to the soul, in those seasons wherein she stands in most need of assistance, merely because it is not possible, in questions of this kind, to solve every difficulty which attends them."

1784. Ætat. 75. with him. On Monday, the 10th, I dined with him at Mr. Paradise's, where was a large company; Mr. Bryant, Mr. Joddrel, Mr. Hawkins Browne, &c. On Thursday, the 13th, I dined with him at Mr. Joddrel's, with another large company; the Bishop of Exeter, Lord Monboddo,[8] Mr. Murphy, &c.

On Saturday, May 15, I dined with him at Dr. Brocklesby's, where were Colonel Vallancy, Mr. Murphy, and that ever-cheerful companion Mr. Devaynes, apothecary to his Majesty. Of these days, and others on which I saw him, I have no memorials, except the general recollection of his being able and animated in conversation, and appearing to relish society as much as the youngest man. I find only these three small particulars:— When a person was mentioned, who said, "I have lived fifty-one years in this world, without having had ten minutes of uneasiness; he exclaimed, "The man who says so, lies: he attempts to impose on human credulity." The Bishop of Exeter[9] in vain observed, that men were very different. His Lordship's manner was not impressive; and I learnt afterwards, that Johnson did not find out that the person who talked to him was a Prelate; if he had,

[8] I was sorry to observe Lord Monboddo avoid any communication with Dr. Johnson. I flattered myself that I had made them very good friends, (see "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," third edition, page 67,) but unhappily his Lordship had resumed and cherished a violent prejudice against my illustrious friend, to whom I must do the justice to say, there was on his part not the least anger, but a good humoured sportiveness. Nay, though he knew of his Lordship's indisposition towards him, he was even kindly; as appeared from his enquiring of me after him, by an abbreviation of his name, "Well, how does *Monny*?

[9] [Dr. John Ross.]

I doubt not that he would have treated him with more respect: for once talking of George Psalmanazar, whom he reverenced for his piety, he said, "I should as soon think of contradicting a Bishop." One of the company provoked him greatly by doing what he could least of all bear, which was quoting something of his own writing, against what he then maintained. "What, Sir, (cried the gentleman,) do you say to

'The busy day, the peaceful night,
'Unfelt, uncounted, glided by?'"[1]

Johnson finding himself thus presented as giving an instance of a man who had lived without uneasiness, was much offended, for he looked upon such a quotation as unfair. His anger burst out in an unjustifiable retort, insinuating that the gentleman's remark was a sally of ebriety; "Sir, there is one passion I would advise you to command: when you have drunk out that glass, don't drink another." Here was exemplified what Goldsmith said of him, with the aid of a very witty image from one of Cibber's Comedies: "There is no arguing with Johnson: for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it."

Another was this: when a gentleman of eminence in the literary world was violently censured for attacking people by anonymous paragraphs in newspapers; he, from the spirit of contradiction as I thought, took up his defence, and said, "Come, come, this is not so terrible a crime; he means only to vex them a little. I do not say that I should do

[1] Verses on the death of Mr. Levett.

1784. Ætat. 75. it; but there is a great difference between him and me; what is fit for Hephæstion is not fit for Alexander."—Another, when I told him that a young and handsome Countess had said to me, "I should think that to be praised by Dr. Johnson would make one a fool all one's life;" and that I answered, 'Madam, I shall make him a fool to-day, by repeating this to him;' he said, "I am too old to be made a fool; but if you say I am made a fool, I shall not deny it. I am much pleased with a compliment, especially from a pretty woman."

On the evening of Saturday, May 15, he was in fine spirits, at our Essex-Head Club. He told us, "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garric k's with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found: I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superiour to them all." BOSWELL. "What! had you them all to yourself, Sir?" JOHNSON. "I had them all as much as they were had; but it might have been better had there been more company there." BOSWELL. "Might not Mrs. Montague have been a fourth?" JOHNSON. "Sir, Mrs. Montague does not make a trade of her wit; but Mrs. Montague is a very extraordinary woman; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated; it has always meaning." BOSWELL. "Mr. Burke has a constant stream of conversation." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say—'this is an extraordinary man.' If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse drest, the ostler would say—we have had an extraordinary man here.'

BOSWELL. "Foote was a man who never failed in conversation. If he had gone into a stable—" JOHNSON. "Sir, if he had gone into the stable, the ostler would have said, here has been a comical fellow; but he would not have respected him." BOSWELL. "And, Sir, the ostler would have answered him, would have given him as good as he brought, as the common saying is." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and Foote would have answered the ostler.——When Burke does not descend to be merry, his conversation is very superiour indeed. There is no proportion between the powers which he shews in serious talk and in jocularity. When he lets himself down to that, he is in the kennel." I have in another place[2] opposed, and I hope with success, Dr. Johnson's very singular and erroneous notion as to Mr. Burke's pleasantry. Mr. Windham now said low to me, that he differed from our great friend in this observation; for that Mr. Burke was often very happy in his merriment. It would not have been right for either of us to have contradicted Johnson at this time, in a Society all of whom did not know and value Mr. Burke as much as we did. It might have occasioned something more rough, and at any rate would probably have checked the flow of Johnson's good-humour. He called to us with a sudden air of exultation, as the thought started into his mind, "O! Gentlemen, I must tell you a very great thing. The Empress of Russia has ordered the 'Rambler' to be translated into the Russian language:[3] so I shall be read on the banks of the Wolga. Horace boasts that

[2] "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," third edition, p. 20.

[3] I have since heard that the report was not well founded; but the elation discovered by Johnson in the belief that it was true, shewed a noble ardour for literary fame.

1784. Ætat. 75. his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone; now the Wolga is farther from me than the Rhone was from Horace." BOSWELL. "You must certainly be pleased with this, Sir." JOHNSON. "I am pleased, Sir, to be sure. A man is pleased to find he has succeeded in that which he has endeavoured to do."

One of the company mentioned his having seen a noble person driving in his carriage, and looking exceedingly well, notwithstanding his great age. JOHNSON. "Ah, Sir; that is nothing. Bacon observes, that a stout healthy old man is like a tower undermined."

On Sunday, May 16, I found him alone; he talked of Mrs. Thrale with much concern, saying, "Sir, she has done every thing wrong, since Thrale's bridle was off her neck;" and was proceeding to mention some circumstances which have since been the subject of publick discussion, when he was interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury.

Dr. Douglas, upon this occasion, refuted a mistaken notion which is very common in Scotland, that the ecclesiastical discipline of the Church of England, though duly enforced, is insufficient to preserve the morals of the clergy, inasmuch as all delinquents may be screened by appealing to the Convocation, which being never authorized by the King to sit for the dispatch of business, the appeal never can be heard. Dr. Douglas observed, that this was founded upon ignorance; for that the Bishops have sufficient power to maintain discipline, and that the sitting of the convocation was wholly immaterial in this respect, it being not a Court of judicature, but like a parliament, to make canons and regulations as times may require.

Johnson, talking of the fear of death, said, "Some people are not afraid, because they look upon salvation as the effect of an absolute decree, and think they feel in themselves the marks of sanctification. Others, and those the most rational in my opinion, look upon salvation as conditional; and as they never can be sure that they have complied with the conditions, they are afraid." 1784. Ætat. 75.

In one of his little manuscript diaries, about this time, I find a short notice, which marks his amiable dispositions more certainly than a thousand studied declarations.—"Afternoon spent cheerfully and elegantly, I hope without offence to GOD or man; though in no holy duty, yet in the general exercise and cultivation of benevolence."

On Monday, May 17, I dined with him at Mr. Dilly's, where were Colonel Vallancy, the Reverend Dr. Gibbons, and Mr. Capel Lofft, who, though a most zealous Whig, has a mind so full of learning and knowledge, and so much exercised in various departments, and withal so much liberality, that the stupendous powers of the literary Goliath, though they did not frighten this little David of popular spirit, could not but excite his admiration. There was also Mr. Braithwaite of the Post-office, that amiable and friendly man, who, with modest and unassuming manners, has associated with many of the wits of the age. Johnson was very quiescent to-day. Perhaps too I was indolent. I find nothing more of him in my notes, but that when I mentioned that I had seen in the King's library sixty-three editions of my favourite Thomas à Kempis,—amongst which it was in eight languages, Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish, English, Arabick, and Armenian,—he

1784. Ætat. 75. said, he thought it unnecessary to collect many editions of a book, which were all the same, except as to the paper and print; he would have the original, and all the translations, and all the editions which had any variations in the text. He approved of the famous collection of editions of Horace by Douglas, mentioned by Pope, who is said to have had a closet filled with them; and he added, "every man should try to collect one book in that manner, and present it to a publick library."

On Tuesday, May 18, I saw him for a short time in the morning. I told him that the mob had called out, as the King passed, "No Fox—No Fox," which I did not like. He said, "They were right, Sir." I said, I thought not; for it seemed to be making Mr. Fox the King's competitor. There being no audience, so that there could be no triumph in a victory, he fairly agreed with me. I said it might do very well, if explained thus: "Let us have no Fox;" understanding it as a prayer to his Majesty not to appoint that gentleman minister.

On Wednesday, May 19, I sat a part of the evening with him, by ourselves. I observed, that the death of our friends might be a consolation against the fear of our own dissolution, because we might have more friends in the other world than in this. He perhaps felt this as a reflection upon his apprehension as to death; and said, with heat, "How can a man know *where* his departed friends are, or whether they will be his friends in the other world. How many friendships have you known formed upon principles of virtue? Most friendships are formed by caprice or by chance, mere confederacies in vice or leagues in folly."

We talked of our worthy friend Mr. Langton. 1784. Ætat. 75.
He said, "I know not who will go to Heaven if Langton does not. Sir, I could almost say, *Sit anima mea cum Langtono*." I mentioned a very eminent friend as a virtuous man. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but ——— has not the evangelical virtue of Langton. ———, I am afraid, would not scruple to pick up a wench."

He however charged Mr. Langton with what he thought want of judgement upon an interesting occasion. "When I was ill, (said he) I desired he would tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty. Sir, he brought me a sheet of paper, on which he had written down several texts of Scripture, recommending christian charity. And when I questioned him what occasion I had given for such an animadversion, all that he could say amounted to this,—that I sometimes contradicted people in conversation. Now what harm does it do to any man to be contradicted?" BOSWELL. "I suppose he meant the *manner* of doing it; roughly,—and harshly." JOHNSON. "And who is the worse for that?" BOSWELL. "It hurts people of weaker nerves." JOHNSON. "I know no such weak-nerved people." Mr. Burke, to whom I related this conference, said, "It is well, if when a man comes to die, he has nothing heavier upon his conscience than having been a little rough in conversation."

Johnson, at the time when the paper was presented to him, though at first pleased with the attention of his friend, whom he thanked in an earnest manner, soon exclaimed in a loud and angry tone, "What is your drift, Sir?" Sir Joshua Reynolds pleasantly observed, that it was a scene for a comedy, to see a

1784. penitent get into a violent passion and belabour his
Ætat. 75. confessor.[4]

I have preserved no more of his conversation at the times when I saw him during the rest of this month, till Sunday, the 30th of May, when I met him in the evening at Mr. Hoole's, where there was a large company both of ladies and gentlemen. Sir James Johnston happened to say, that he paid no regard to the arguments of counsel at the bar of the House of Commons, because they were paid for speaking. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, argument is argument. You cannot help paying regard to their arguments, if they are good. If it were testimony, you might disregard it, if you knew that it were purchased. There is a beautiful image in Bacon[5] upon

[4] After all, I cannot, but be of opinion, that as Mr. Langton was seriously requested by Dr. Johnson to mention what appeared to him erroneous in the character of his friend, he was bound as an honest man, to intimate what he really thought, which he certainly did in the most delicate manner; so that Johnson himself, when in a quiet frame of mind, was pleased with it. The texts suggested are now before me, and I shall quote a few of them. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." *Mat.* v. 5.—"I therefore, the prisoner of the LORD, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." *Ephes.* v. 1, 2.—"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." *Col.* iii. 14.—"Charity suffereth long, and is kind: charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked." 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4, 5.

[5] [Dr. Johnson's memory deceived him. The passage referred to is not Bacon's, but Boyle's: and may be found, with a slight variation, in Johnson's Dictionary, under the word—CROSS-BOW.—So happily selected are the greater part of the examples in that incomparable work, that if the most striking passages found

this subject: testimony is like an arrow shot from a long bow; the force of it depends on the strength of the hand that draws it. Argument is like an arrow from a cross-bow, which has equal force though shot by a child." 1784. Ætat. 75.

He had dined that day at Mr. Hoole's, and Miss Helen Maria Williams being expected in the evening, Mr. Hoole put into his hands her beautiful "Ode on the Peace:"[6] Johnson read it over, and when this elegant, and accomplished young lady[7] was presented to him, he took her by the hand in the most courteous manner, and repeated the finest stanza of her poem; this was the most delicate and pleasing compliment he could pay. Her respectable friend, Dr. Kippis, from whom I had this anecdote, was standing by, and was not a little gratified.

Miss Williams told me, that the only other time

in it were collected by one of our modern book-makers, under the title of THE BEAUTIES OF JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY, they would form a very pleasing and popular volume. M.]

[6] The Peace made by that very able statesman, the Earl of Shelburne, now Marquis of Lansdown, which may fairly be considered as the foundation of all the prosperity of Great Britain since that time.

[7] In the first edition of my Work, the epithet *amiable* was given. I was sorry to be obliged to strike it out; but I could not in justice suffer it to remain, after this young lady had not only written in favour of the savage Anarchy with which France has been visited, but had (as I have been informed by good authority,) walked, without horrour, over the ground at the Thuilleries when it was strewed with the naked bodies of the faithful Swiss Guards, who were barbarously massacred for having bravely defended, against a crew of ruffians, the Monarch whom they had taken an oath to defend. From Dr. Johnson she could now expect not endearment but repulsion.

1784. she was fortunate enough to be in Dr. Jonhson's com-
Ætat. 75. pany, he asked her to sit down by him, which she did, and upon her enquiring how he was, he answered, "I am very ill indeed, Madam. I am very ill even when you are near me; what should I be were you at a distance."

He had now a great desire to go to Oxford, as his first jaunt after his illness; we talked of it for some days, and I had promised to accompany him. He was impatient and fretful to-night, because I did not at once agree to go with him on Thursday. When I considered how ill he had been, and what allowance should be made for the influence of sickness upon his temper, I resolved to indulge him, though with some inconvenience to myself, as I wished to attend the musical meeting in honour of Handel, in Westminister-Abbey, on the following Saturday.

In the midst of his own diseases and pains, he was ever compassionate to the distresses of others, and actively earnest in procuring them aid, as appears from a note to Sir Joshua Reynolds, of June, in these words: "I am ashamed to ask for some relief for a poor man, to whom, I hope, I have given what I can be expected to spare. The man importunes me, and the blow goes round. I am going to try another air on Thursday."

On Thursday, June 3, the Oxford post-coach took us up in the morning at Bolt court. The other two passengers were Mrs. Beresford and her daughter, two very agreeable ladies from America; they were going to Worcestershire, where they then resided. Frank had been sent by his master the day before to take places for us; and I found from the way-bill

that Dr. Johnson had made our names be put down. 1784. Ætat. 75.
Mrs. Beresford, who had read it, whispered me, "Is this the great Dr. Johnson?" I told her it was; so she was then prepared to listen. As she soon happened to mention in a voice so low that Johnson did not hear it, that her husband had been a member of the American Congress, I cautioned her to beware of introducing that subject, as she must know how very violent Johnson was against the people of that country. He talked a great deal. But I am sorry I have preserved little of the conversation. Miss Beresford was so much charmed, that she said to me aside, "How he does talk! Every sentence is an essay." She amused herself in the coach with knotting; he would scarcely allow this species of employment any merit. "Next to mere idleness (said he) I think knotting is to be reckoned in the scale of insignificance; though I once attempted to learn knotting. Dempster's sister (looking to me) endeavoured to teach me it; but I made no progress."

I was surprised at his talking without reserve in the publick post-coach of the state of his affairs; "I have (said he) about the world I think above a thousand pounds, which I intend shall afford Frank an annuity of seventy pounds a year." Indeed his openness with people at a first interview was remarkable. He said once to Mr. Langton, "I think I am like Squire Richard in 'The Journey to London,' "*I'm never strange in a strange place.*" He was truly *social*. He strongly censured what is much too common in England among persons of condition,—maintaining an absolute silence, when unknown to each other; as for instance, when occasionally

1784. Ætat. 75. brought together in a room before the master or mistress of the house has appeared. "Sir, that is being so uncivilized as not to understand the common rights of humanity."

At the inn where we stopped he was exceedingly dissatisfied with some roast mutton which he had for dinner. The ladies, I saw, wondered to see the great philosopher, whose wisdom and wit they had been admiring all the way, get into ill-humour from such a cause. He scolded the waiter, saying, "It is as bad as bad can be: it is ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-drest."

He bore the journey very well, and seemed to feel himself elevated as he approached Oxford, that magnificent and venerable seat of Learning, Orthodoxy, and Toryism. Frank came in the heavy coach, in readiness to attend him; and we were received with the most polite hospitality at the house of his old friend Dr. Adams, Master of Pembroke College, who had given us a kind invitation. Before we were set down, I communicated to Johnson, my having engaged to return to London directly, for the reason I have mentioned, but that I would hasten back to him again. He was pleased that I had made this journey merely to keep him company. He was easy and placid, with Dr. Adams, Mrs. and Miss Adams, and Mrs. Kennicot, widow of the learned Hebræan, who was here on a visit. He soon dispatched the enquiries which were made about his illness and recovery, by a short and distinct narrative; and then assuming a gay air, repeated from Swift,

"Nor think on our approaching ills,
"And talked of spectacles and pills."

Dr. Newton, the Bishop of Bristol, having been mentioned, Johnson, recollecting the manner in which he had been censured by that Prelate,[8] thus retaliated:—"Tom knew he should be dead before what he has said of me would appear. He durst not have printed it while he was alive." DR. ADAMS, "I believe his 'Dissertations on the Prophecies' is his great work." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is *Tom's* great work; but how far it is great, or how much of it is Tom's, are other questions. I fancy a considerable part of it was borrowed." DR. ADAMS. "He

1784. Ætat. 75.

[8] Dr. Newton in his Account of his own Life, after animadverting upon Mr. Gibbon's History, says, "Dr. Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets' afforded more amusement; but candour was much hurt and offended at the malevolence that predominates in every part. Some passages, it must be allowed, are judicious and well written, but make not sufficient compensation for so much spleen and ill-humour. Never was any biographer more sparing of his praise, or more abundant in his censures. He seemingly delights more in exposing blemishes, than in recommending beauties; slightly passes over excellencies, enlarges upon imperfections, and not content with his own severe reflections, revives old scandal, and produces large quotations from the forgotten works of former criticks. His reputation was so high in the republick of letters, that it wanted not to be raised upon the ruins of others. But these Essays, instead of raising a higher idea than was before entertained of his understanding, have certainly given the world a worse opinion of his temper.—The Bishop was therefore the more surprized and concerned for his townsman, for *he respected him not only for his genius and learning, but valued him much for the more amiable part of his character, his humanity and charity, his morality and religion.*" The last sentence we may consider as the general and permanent opinion of Bishop Newton; the remarks which precede it must, by all who have read Johnson's admirable work, be imputed to the disgust and peevishness of old age. I wish they had not appeared, and that Dr. Johnson had not been provoked by them to express himself not in respectful terms, of a Prelate, whose labours were certainly of considerable advantage both to literature and religion.

1784. Ætat. 75. was a very successful man." JOHNSON. "I don't think so, Sir.—He did not get very high. He was late in getting what he did get; and he did not get it by the best means. I believe he was a gross flatterer."

I fulfilled my intention by going to London, and returned to Oxford on Wednesday the 9th of June, when I was happy to find myself again in the same agreeable circle at Pembroke College, with the comfortable prospect of making some stay. Johnson welcomed my return with more than ordinary glee.

He talked with great regard of the Honourable Archibald Campbell, whose character he had given at the Duke of Argyll's table, when we were at Inverary;[9] and at this time wrote out for me, in his own hand, a fuller account of that learned and venerable writer, which I have published in its proper place. Johnson made a remark this evening which struck me a good deal. "I never (said he) knew a nonjuror who could reason."[1] Surely he did not mean to deny that faculty to many of their writers; to

[9] "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," third edit. p. 371.

[1] The Rev. Mr. Agutter has favoured me with a note of a dialogue between Mr. John Henderson and Dr. Johnson on this topick, as related by Mr. Henderson, and it is evidently so authentick that I shall here insert it:—HENDERSON. "What do you think, Sir, of William Law?" JOHNSON. "William Law, Sir, wrote the best piece of Parenetick Divinity; but William Law was no reasoner." HENDERSON. "Jeremy Collier, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Jeremy Collier fought without a rival, and therefore could not claim the victory." Mr. Henderson mentioned Kenn and Kettlewell; but some objections were made; at last he said, but, Sir, "What do you think of Lesley?" JOHNSON. "Charles Lesley I had forgotten. Lesley *was* a reasoner, and *a reasoner who was not to be reasoned against.*"

Hickes, Brett, and other eminent divines of that persuasion; and did not recollect that the seven Bishops, so justly celebrated for their magnanimous resistance of arbitrary power, were yet Nonjurors to the new Government. The nonjuring clergy of Scotland, indeed, who, excepting a few, have lately, by a sudden stroke, cut off all ties of allegiance to the house of Stuart, and resolved to pray for our present lawful Sovereign by name, may be thought to have confirmed this remark; as it may be said, that the divine indefeasible hereditary right which they professed to believe, if ever true, must be equally true still. Many of my readers will be surprized when I mention, that Johnson assured me he had never in his life been in a nonjuring meeting-house. 1784. Ætat. 75.

Next morning at breakfast, he pointed out a passage in Savage's "Wanderer," saying "These are fine verses."—"If (said he) I had written with hostility of Warburton in my Shakspeare, I should have quoted this couplet:

'Here Learning, blinded first, and then beguil'd,
'Looks dark as Ignorance, as Frenzy wild.

You see they'd have fitted him to a *T*," (smiling.) Dr. Adams. "But you did not write against Warburton." Johnson. "No, Sir, I treated him with great respect both in my preface and in my Notes."

Mrs. Kennicot spoke of her brother, the Reverend Mr. Chamberlayne, who had given up great prospects in the Church of England on his conversion to the Roman Catholick faith. Johnson, who warmly admired every man who acted from a conscientious regard to principle, erroneous or not, exclaimed fervently, "God bless him."

1784. Mrs. Kennicot, in confirmation of Dr. Johnson's
Ætat. 75. opinion, that the present was not worse than former ages, mentioned that her brother assured her, there was now less infidelity on the Continent than there had been; Voltaire and Rousseau were less read. I asserted, from good authority, that Hume's infidelity was certainly less read. JOHNSON. "All infidel writers drop into oblivion, when personal connections and the floridness of novelty are gone; though now and then a foolish fellow, who thinks he can be witty upon them, may bring them again into notice. There will sometimes start up a College joker, who does not consider that what is a joke in a College will not do in the world. To such defenders of Religion I would apply a stanza of a poem which I remember to have seen in some old collection:

'Henceforth be quiet and agree,
'Each kiss his empty brother;
'Religion scorns a foe like thee,
'But dreads a friend like t'other.'

The point is well, though the expression is not correct; *one*, and not *thee*, should be opposed to *t'other*."[2]

[2] I have inserted the stanza as Johnson repeated it from memory; but I have since found the poem itself, in "The Foundling Hospital for Wit," printed at London, 1749. It is as follows:

"EPIGRAM, *occasioned by a religious dispute at Bath.*

"On Reason, Faith, and Mystery high,
"Two wits harangue the table;
"B——y believes he knows not why,
"N—— swears 'tis all a fable.

On the Roman Catholick religion he said, "If you join the Papists externally, they will not interrogate you strictly as to your belief in their tenets. No reasoning Papist believes every article of their faith. There is one side on which a good man might be persuaded to embrace it. A good man of a timorous disposition, in great doubt of his acceptance with GOD, and pretty credulous, may be glad to be of a church where there are so many helps to get to Heaven. I would be a Papist if I could. I have fear enough; but an obstinate rationality prevents me. I shall never be a Papist, unless on the near approach of death, of which I have a very great terrour. I wonder that women are not all Papists." BOSWELL. "They are not more afraid of death than men are." JOHNSON. "Because they are less wicked." DR. ADAMS. "They are more pious." JOHNSON. "No, hang e'm, they are not more pious. A wicked fellow is the most pious when he takes to it. He'll beat you all at piety." 1784. Ætat. 75.

He argued in defence of some of the peculiar tenets of the Church of Rome. As to the giving the bread only to the laity, he said, "They may think, that in what is merely ritual, deviations from the primitive mode may be admitted on the ground of convenience; and I think they are as well warranted to make this alteration, as we are to substitute sprinkling in the room of the ancient baptism. As to the invocation of saints, he said, "Though I do not think it authorised, it appears to me, that 'the

" Peace, coxcombs, peace, and both agree,
" N———, kiss thy empty brother;
" Religion laughs at foes like thee,
" And dreads a friend like t'other."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, TANJORE

1784. 'communion of saints' in the Creed means the com-
Ætat. 75. munion with the saints in Heaven, as connected with 'The holy Catholick church."[3] He admitted the influence of evil spirits upon our minds, and said, "Nobody who believes the New Testament can deny it."

I brought a volume of Dr. Hurd, the Bishop of Worcester's Sermons, and read to the company some passages from one of them, upon this text, "*Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you.*" James iv. 7. I was happy to produce so judicious and elegant a supporter[4] of a doctrine, which, I know not why,

[3] Waller, in his "Divine Poesie," Canto first, has the same thought finely expressed:

"The Church triumphant, and the Church below,
"In songs of praise their present union show;
"Their joys are full; our expectation long,
"In life we differ, but we join in song;
"Angels and we assisted by this art,
"May sing together, though we dwell apart."

[4] The Sermon thus opens:—"That there are angels and spirits good and bad; that at the head of these last there is ONE more considerable and malignant than the rest, who, in the form, or under the name of a *serpent*, was deeply concerned in the fall of man, and whose *head*, as the prophetick language is, the son of man was one day to *bruise*; that this evil spirit, though that prophesy be in part completed, has not yet received his death's wound, but is still permitted, for ends unsearchable to us, and in ways which we cannot particularly explain, to have a certain degree of power in this world hostile to its virtue and happiness, and sometimes exerted with too much success; all this is so clear from Scripture, that no believer, unless he be first of all *spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit*, can possibly entertain a doubt of it."

Having treated of *possessions*, his Lordship says, "As I have no authority to affirm that there *are* now any such, so neither may I presume to say with confidence, that there are *not* any."

"But then with regard to the influence of evil spirits at this day

should, in this world of imperfect knowledge, and, therefore, of wonder and mystery in a thousand instances, be contested by some with an unthinking assurance and flippancy. 1784. Ætat. 75.

After dinner, when one of us talked of there being a great enmity between Whig and Tory;—JOHNSON. "Why, not so much, I think, unless when they come into competition with each other. There is none when they are only common acquaintance, none when they are of different sexes. A Tory will marry into a Whig family, and a Whig into a Tory family, without any reluctance. But indeed, in a matter of much more concern than political tenets, and that is religion, men and women do not concern themselves much about difference of opinion; and ladies set no value on the moral character of men who pay their addresses to them; the greatest pro-

upon the SOULS of men, I shall take leave to be a great deal more peremptory.—[Then, having stated the various proofs, he adds,] All this, I say, is so manifest to every one who reads the Scriptures, that, if we respect their authority, the question concerning the reality of the demoniack influence upon the minds of men is clearly determined."

Let it be remembered, that these are not the words of an antiquated or obscure enthusiast, but of a learned and polite Prelate now alive; and were spoken, not to a vulgar congregation, but to the Honourable Society of Lincoln's-Inn. His Lordship in this Sermon explains the words, "deliver us from evil," in the Lord's Prayer, as signifying a request to be protected from "the evil one," that is, the Devil. This is well illustrated in a short but excellent Commentary by my late worthy friend, the Reverend Dr. Lort, of whom it may truly be said, *Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit*. It is remarkable that Waller in his "Reflections on the several Petitions, in that sacred form of devotion," has understood this in the same sense:

"Guard us from all temptations of the FOE."

1784. Ætat. 75. fligate will be as well received as the man of the greatest virtue, and this by a very good woman, by a woman who says her prayers three times a day." Our ladies endeavoured to defend their sex from this charge; but he roared them down! "No, no, a lady will take Jonathan Wild as readily as St. Austin, if he has threepence more; and, what is worse, her parents will give her to him. Women have a perpetual envy of our vices; they are less vicious than we, not from choice, but because we restrict them; they are the slaves of order and fashion; their virtue is of more consequence to us than our own, so far as concerns this world."

Miss Adams mentioned a gentleman of licentious character, and said, "Suppose I had a mind to marry that gentleman, would my parents consent?" Johnson. "Yes, they'd consent, and you'd go. You'd go, though they did not consent." Miss Adams. "Perhaps their opposing might make me go." Johnson. "O, very well; you'd take one whom you think a bad man, to have the pleasure of vexing your parents. You put me in mind of Dr. Barrowby, the physician, who was very fond of swine's flesh. One day, when he was eating it, he said, 'I wish I was a Jew.'—'Why so? (said somebody,) the Jews are not allowed to eat your favourite meat.'—'Because, (said he,) I should then have the gust of eating it, with the pleasure of sinning."—Johnson then proceeded in his declamation.

Miss Adams soon afterwards made an observation that I do not recollect, which pleased him much; he said with a good-humoured smile, "That there should be so much excellence united with so much *depravity*, is strange."

Indeed, this lady's good qualities, merit, and accomplishments, and her constant attention to Dr. Johnson, were not lost upon him. She happened to tell him that a little coffee-pot, in which she had made him coffee, was the only thing she could call her own. He turned to her with a complacent gallantry, "Don't say so, my dear; I hope you don't reckon my heart as nothing." 1784. Ætat. 75.

I asked him if it was true as reported, that he had said lately, "I am for the King against Fox; but I am for Fox against Pitt." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; the King is my master; but I do not know Pitt; and Fox is my friend."

"Fox, (added he,) is a most extraordinary man; here is a man (describing him in strong terms of objection in some respects according as he apprehended, but which exalted his abilities the more,) who has divided the Kingdom with Cæsar; so that it was a doubt whether the nation should be ruled by the sceptre of George the Third, or the tongue of Fox."

Dr. Wall, physician at Oxford, drank tea with us. Johnson had in general a peculiar pleasure in the company of physicians, which was certainly not abated by the conversation of this learned, ingenious, and pleasing gentleman. Johnson said, "It is wonderful how little good Radcliffe's travelling fellowships have done. I know nothing that has been imported by them; yet many additions to our medical knowledge might be got in foreign countries. Inoculation, for instance, has saved more lives than war destroys: and the cures performed by the Peruvian-bark are innumerable. But it is in vain to send our travelling physicians to France, and Italy, and

1784. Ætat. 75. Germany, for all that is known there is known here: I'd send them out of Christendom; I'd send them among barbarous nations."

On Friday, June 11, we talked at breakfast, of forms of prayer. JOHNSON. "I know of no good prayers but those in the 'Book of Common Prayer." DR. ADAMS, (in a very earnest manner): "I wish, Sir, you would compose some family prayers." JOHNSON. "I will not compose prayers for you, Sir, because you can do it for yourself. But I have thought of getting together all the books of prayers which I could, selecting those which should appear to me the best, putting out some, inserting others, adding some prayers of my own, and prefixing a discourse on prayer." We all now gathered about him, and two or three of us at a time joined in pressing him to execute this plan. He seemed to be a little displeased at the manner of our importunity, and in great agitation called out, "Do not talk thus of what is so aweful. I know not what time GOD will allow me in this world. There are many things which I wish to do." Some of us persisted, and Dr. Adams said, "I never was more serious about any thing in my life." JOHNSON. "Let me alone, let me alone; I am overpowered." And then he put his hands before his face, and reclined for some time upon the table.

I mentioned Jeremy Taylor's using, in his forms of prayer, "I am the chief of sinners," and other such self-condemning expressions. "Now, (said I) this cannot be said with truth by every man, and therefore is improper for a general printed form. I myself cannot say that I am the worst of men; I *will* not say so. JOHNSON. "A man may know,

that physically, that is, in the real state of things, he is not the worst man; but that morally he may be so. Law observes, that every man knows something worse of himself, than he is sure of in others.' You may not have committed such crimes as some men have done; but you do not know against what degree of light they have sinned. Besides, Sir, 'the chief of sinners' is a mode of expression for 'I am a great sinner.' So St. Paul, speaking of our SAVIOUR's having died to save sinners, says, 'of whom I am the chief:' yet he certainly did not think himself so bad as Judas Iscariot." BOSWELL. "But Sir, Taylor means it literally, for he founds a conceit upon it. When praying for the conversion of sinners, and of himself in particular, he says, 'LORD, thou wilt not leave thy *chief* work undone.'" JOHNSON. "I do not approve of figurative expressions in addressing the Supreme Being; and I never use them. Taylor gives a very good advice: 'Never lie in your prayers; never confess more than you really believe; never promise more than you mean to perform.'" I recollected this precept in his 'Golden Grove;' but his *example* for prayer contradicts his *precept*.

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Dr. Johnson and I went in Dr. Adams's coach to dine with Mr. Nowell, Principal of St. Mary Hall, at his beautiful villa at Iffley, on the banks of the Isis, about two miles from Oxford. While we were upon the road, I had the resolution to ask Johnson whether he thought that the roughness of his manner had been an advantage or not, and if he would not have done more good if he had been more gentle. I proceeded to answer myself thus: "Perhaps it has been of advantage, as it has given weight

1784. to what you said: you could not, perhaps, have talked with such authority without it." JOHNSON.
Ætat. 75. "No, Sir; I have done more good as I am. Obscenity and Impiety have always been repressed in my company." BOSWELL. "True, Sir; and that is more than can be said of every Bishop. Greater liberties have been taken in the presence of a Bishop, though a very good man, from his being milder, and therefore not commanding such awe. Yet, Sir; many people who might have been benefited by your conversation, have been frightened away. A worthy friend of ours has told me, that he has often been afraid to talk to you." JOHNSON. "Sir, he need not have been afraid, if he had any thing rational to say.[5] If he had not, it was better he did not talk."

Dr. Nowell is celebrated for having preached a sermon before the House of Commons, on the 30th of January, 1772, full of high Tory sentiments, for which he was thanked as usual, and printed it at their request; but, in the midst of that turbulence and faction which disgraced a part of the present reign, the thanks were afterwards ordered to be expunged. This strange conduct sufficiently exposes itself; and Dr. Nowell will ever have the honour which is due to a lofty friend of our monarchical constitution. Dr. Johnson said to me, "Sir, the Court will be very much to blame, if he is not promoted." I told this to Dr. Nowell; and asserting my humbler, though not less zealous exertions in the

[[5] The words of Erasmus (as my learned friend Dr. Kearney observes to me,) may be applied to Johnson: "Qui ingenium, sensum dictionem hominis noverant, multis non offenduntur, quibus graviter erant offendendi, qui hæc ignorarunt." M.]

same cause, I suggested, that whatever return we might receive, we should still have the consolation of being like Butler's steady and generous Royalist, 1784. Ætat. 75.

"True as the dial to the sun,
"Although it be not shone upon."

We were well entertained and very happy at Dr. Nowell's, where was a very agreeable company; and we drank "Church and King" after dinner, with true Tory cordiality.

We talked of a certain clergyman of extraordinary character, who by exerting his talents in writing on temporary topicks, and displaying uncommon intrepidity, had raised himself to affluence. I maintained that we ought not to be indignant at his success; for merit of every sort was entitled to reward. Johnson. "Sir, I will not allow this man to have merit. No, Sir; what he has is rather the contrary; I will, indeed, allow him courage, and on this account we so far give him credit. We have more respect for a man who robs boldly on the highway, than for a fellow who jumps out of a ditch, and knocks you down behind your back. Courage is a quality so necessary for maintaining virtue, that it is always respected, even when it is associated with vice."

I censured the coarse invectives which were become fashionable in the House of Commons, and said that if members of parliament must attack each other personally in the heat of debate, it should be done more genteely. Johnson. "No, Sir; that would be much worse. Abuse is not so dangerous when there is no vehicle of wit or delicacy, no subtle conveyance. The difference between coarse and refined abuse is as the difference between being bruised

1784. by a club, and wounded by a poisoned arrow."—I
Ætat. 75. have since observed his position elegantly expressed by Dr. Young:

"As the soft plume gives swiftness to the dart,
"Good breeding sends the satire to the heart."

On Saturday, June 12, there drank tea with us at Dr. Adams's, Mr. John Henderson, student of Pembroke-College, celebrated for his wonderful acquirements in Alchymy, Judicial Astrology, and other abstruse and curious learning;[6] and the Reverend Herbert Croft, who, I am afraid, was somewhat mortified by Dr. Johnson's not being highly pleased with some "Family Discourses," which he had printed; they were in too familiar a style to be approved of by so manly a mind. I have no note of this evening's conversation, except a single fragment. When I mentioned Thomas Lord Lyttelton's vision, the prediction of the time of his death, and its exact fulfilment;—JOHNSON. "It is the most extraordinary thing that has happened in my day. I heard it with my own ears, from his uncle, Lord Westcote.[7] I am so glad to have every evidence of the spiritual world, that I am willing to believe it." DR. ADAMS. "You have evidence enough; good evidence, which needs not such support." JOHNSON. "I like to have more."

Mr. Henderson, with whom I had sauntered in the venerable walks of Merton-College, and found

[6] See an account of him, in a sermon by the Reverend Mr. Agutter.

[7] [A correct account of Lord Lyttelton's supposed Vision may be found in Nashe's "History of Worcestershire;"—ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS, p. 36. M.]

him a very learned and pious man, supped with us. Dr. Johnson surprised him not a little, by acknowledging with a look of horrour, that he was much oppressed by the fear of death. The amiable Dr. Adams suggested that GOD was infinitely good. JOHNSON. "That he is infinitely good, as far as the perfection of his nature will allow, I certainly believe; but it is necessary for good upon the whole, that individuals should be punished. As to an *individual*, therefore, he is not infinitely good; and as I cannot be *sure* that I have fulfilled the conditions on which salvation is granted, I am afraid I may be one of those who shall be damned." (looking dismally.) DR. ADAMS. "What do you mean by damned?" JOHNSON. (passionately and loudly) "Sent to Hell, Sir, and punished everlastingly." DR. ADAMS. "I don't believe that doctrine." JOHNSON. "Hold, Sir, do you believe that some will be punished at all?" DR. ADAMS. "Being excluded from Heaven will be a punishment; yet there may be no great positive suffering." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir; but, if you admit any degree of punishment, there is an end of your argument for infinite goodness simply considered; for, infinite goodness would inflict no punishment whatever. There is not infinite goodness physically considered; morally there is." BOSWELL. "But may not a man attain to such a degree of hope as not to be uneasy from the fear of death?" JOHNSON. "A man may have such a degree of hope as to keep him quiet. You see I am not quiet, from the vehemence with which I talk; but I do not despair." MRS. ADAMS. "You seem, Sir, to forget the merits of our Redeemer." JOHNSON. "Madam, I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer; but my Re-

1784. Ætat. 75.

1784. Ætat. 75. deemer has said that he will set some on his right hand and some on his left."—He was in gloomy agitation, and said, "I'll have no more on't."—If what has now been stated should be urged by the enemies of Christianity, as if its influence on the mind were not benignant, let it be remembered, that Johnson's temperament was melancholy, of which such direful apprehensions of futurity are often a common effect. We shall presently see, that when he approached nearer to his aweful change, his mind became tranquil, and he exhibited as much fortitude as becomes a thinking man in that situation.

From the subject of death we passed to discourse of life, whether it was upon the whole more happy or miserable. Johnson was decidedly for the balance of misery:[8] in confirmation of which I maintained, that

[8] The Reverend Mr. Ralph Churton, Fellow of Brazen-Nose College, Oxford, has favoured me with the following remarks on my Work, which he is pleased to say, "I have hitherto extolled, and cordially approve."

"The chief part of what I have to observe is contained in the following transcript from a letter to a friend, which, with his concurrence, I copied for this purpose; and, whatever may be the merit or justness of the remarks, you may be sure that being written to a most intimate friend, without any intention that they ever should go further, they are the genuine and undisguised sentiments of the writer:

'Jan. 6, 1792.

'Last week, I was reading the second volume of Boswell's Johnson, with increasing esteem for the worthy authour, and increasing veneration of the wonderful and excellent man who is the subject of it. The writer throws in, now and then, very properly some serious religious reflections; but there is one remark, in my mind an obvious and just one, which I think he has not made, that Johnson's "morbid melancholy," and constitutional infirmities, were intended by Providence, like St. Paul's thorn in

no man would choose to lead over again the life which he had experienced. Johnson acceded to that 1784. Ætat. 75.

the flesh, to check intellectual conceit and arrogance; which the consciousness of his extraordinary talents, awake as he was to the voice of praise, might otherwise have generated in a very culpable degree. Another observation strikes me, that in consequence of the same natural indisposition, and habitual sickliness, (for he says he scarcely passed one day without pain after his twentieth year,) he considered and represented human life, as a scene of much greater misery than is generally experienced. There may be persons bowed down with affliction all their days; and there are those, no doubt, whose iniquities rob them of rest; but neither calamities nor crimes, I hope and believe, do so much and so generally abound, as to justify the dark picture of life which Johnson's imagination designed, and his strong pencil delineated. This I am sure, the colouring is far too gloomy for what I have experienced, though as far as I can remember, I have had more sickness, (I do not say more severe, but only more in quantity,) than falls to the lot of most people. But then daily debility and occasional sickness were far overbalanced by intervenient days, and, perhaps, weeks void of pain, and overflowing with comfort. So that in short, to return to the subject, human life, as far as I can perceive from experience or observation, is not that state of constant wretchedness which Johnson always insisted it was: which misrepresentation, (for such it surely is,) his Biographer has not corrected, I suppose, because, unhappily, he has himself a large portion of melancholy in his constitution, and fancied the portrait a faithful copy of life.'

The learned writer then proceeds thus in his letter to me:

"I have conversed with some sensible men on this subject, who all seem to entertain the same sentiments respecting life with those which are expressed or implied in the foregoing paragraph. It might be added that as the representation here spoken of, appears not consistent with fact and experience, so neither does it seem to be countenanced by Scripture. There is, perhaps, no part of the sacred volume which at first sight promises so much to lend its sanction to these dark and desponding notions as the book of Ecclesiastes, which so often, and so emphatically, proclaims the vanity of things sublunary. But 'the design of this whole book, (as it has been justly observed,) is not to put us out of conceit with

1784. opinion in the strongest terms. This is an enquiry often made; and its being a subject of disquisition is
Ætat. 75.

life, but to cure our vain expectations of a compleat and perfect happiness in this world; to convince us, that there is no such thing to be found in mere external enjoyments;—and to teach us—to seek for happiness in the practice of virtue, in the knowledge and love of God, and in the hopes of a better life. For this is the application of all: *Let us hear*, &c. xii. 13. Not only his duty, but his happiness too: *For* God, &c. ver. 14.—See 'Sherlock on Providence,' p. 299.

"The New Testament tells us, indeed, and most truly, that 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;' and, therefore, wisely forbids us to increase our burden by forebodings of sorrows; but I think it now here says that even our ordinary afflictions are not consistent with a very considerable degree of positive comfort and satisfaction. And, accordingly, one whose sufferings as well as merits were conspicuous, assures us, that in proportion 'as the sufferings of Christ abounded in them, so their consolation also abounded by Christ.' 2 Cor. i. 5. It is needless to cite, as indeed it would be endless even to refer to, the multitude of passages in both Testaments holding out, in the strongest language, promises of blessings, even in this world, to the faithful servants of God. I will only refer to St. Luke xviii. 29, 30. and 1 Tim. iv. 8.

"Upon the whole, setting aside instances of great and lasting bodily pain, of minds peculiarly oppressed by melancholy, and of severe temporal calamities, from which extraordinary cases we surely should not form our estimate of the general tenour and complexion of life; excluding these from the account, I am convinced that as well the gracious constitution of things which Providence has ordained, as the declarations of Scripture and the actual experience of individuals, authorize the sincere Christian to hope that his humble and constant endeavours to perform his duty, chequered as the best life is with many failings, will be crowned with a greater degree of present peace, serenity and comfort, than he could reasonably permit himself to expect, if he measured his views and judged of life from the opinion of Dr. Johnson, often and energetically expressed in the Memoirs of him, without any animadversion or censure by his ingenious Biographer. If He himself, upon reviewing the subject, shall see the matter in this

a proof that much misery presses upon human feel- 1784.
ings; for those who are conscious of a felicity of ex- Ætat. 75.

light, he will, in an octavo edition, which is eagerly expected, make such additional remarks or corrections as he shall judge fit; lest the impressions which these discouraging passages may leave on the reader's mind, should in any degree hinder what otherwise the whole spirit and energy of the work tends, and, I hope, successfully, to promote,—pure morality and true religion."

Though I have, in some degree, obviated any reflections against my illustrious friend's dark views of life, when considering, in the course of this Work, his "Rambler" and his "Rasselas," I am obliged to Mr. Churton for complying with my request of his permission to insert his Remarks, being conscious of the weight of what he judiciously suggests as to the melancholy in my own constitution. His more pleasing views of life, I hope, are just. *Valeant, quantùm valere possunt.*

Mr. Churton concludes his letter to me in these words: "Once, and only once, I had the satisfaction of seeing your illustrious friend; and as I feel a particular regard for all whom he distinguished with his esteem and friendship, so I derive much pleasure from reflecting that I once beheld, though but transiently near our College-gate, one whose works will for ever delight and improve the world, who was a sincere and zealous son of the Church of England, an honour to his country, and an ornament to human nature."

His letter was accompanied with a present from himself of his "Sermons at the Bampton Lecture," and from his friend, Dr. Townson, the venerable Rector of Malpas in Cheshire, of his "Discourses on the Gospels," together with the following extract of a letter from that excellent person, who is now gone to receive the reward of his labours: "Mr. Boswell is not only very entertaining in his works, but they are so replete with moral and religious sentiments, without an instance, as far as I know, of a contrary tendency, that I cannot help having a great esteem for him; and if you think such a trifle as a copy of the Discoures, *ex dono authoris,* would be acceptable to him, I should be happy to give him this small testimony of my regard."

Such spontaneous testimonies of approbation from such men, without any personal acquaintance with me, are truly valuable and encouraging.

1784. Ætat. 75. istence, would never hesitate to accept of a repetition of it. I have met with very few who would. I have heard Mr. Burke make use of a very ingenious and plausible argument on this subject; "Every man (said he) would lead his life over again; for, every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded." I imagine, however, the truth is, that there is a deceitful hope that the next part of life will be free from the pains, and anxieties, and sorrows, which we have already felt. We are for wise purposes "Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine," as Johnson finely says; and I may also quote the celebrated lines of Dryden, equally philosophical and poetical:

"When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
"Yet fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
"Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;
"To-morrow's falser than the former day;
"Lies worse; and while it says we shall be blest
"With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
"Strange cozenage! none would live past years again;
"Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
"And from the dregs of life think to receive,
"What the first sprightly running could not give."[9]

It was observed to Dr. Johnson, that it seemed strange that he, who has so often delighted his company by his lively and brilliant conversation, should say he was miserable. Johnson. "Alas! it is all

[9] Aurengzebe, Act. iv. Sc. I.

outside; I may be cracking my joke, and cursing the sun. *Sun, how I hate thy beams!*" I knew not well what to think of this declaration; whether to hold it as a genuine picture of his mind,[1] or as the effect of his persuading himself contrary to fact, that the position which he had assumed as to human unhappiness, was true. We may apply to him a sentence in Mr. Greville's "Maxims, Characters, and Reflections;"[2] a book which is entitled to much more praise than it has received: "ARISTARCHUS is charming: how full of knowledge, of sense, of sentiment. You get him with difficulty to your supper; and after having delighted every body and himself for a few hours, he is obliged to return home;—he is finishing his treatise, to prove that unhappiness is the portion of man." 1784. Ætat. 75.

On Sunday, June 13, our philosopher was calm at breakfast. There was something exceedingly pleasing in our leading a College life, without restraint, and with superiour elegance, in consequence of our living in the Master's House, and having the company of ladies. Mrs. Kennicot related, in his presence, a lively saying of Dr. Johnson to Miss Hannah More, who had expressed a wonder that the poet who had written "Paradise Lost," should write such poor Sonnets:—"Milton, Madam, was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones."

We talked of the casuistical question, Whether it

[1] Yet there is no doubt that a man may appear very gay in company, who is sad at heart. His merriment is like the sound of drums and trumpets in a battle, to drown the groans of the wounded and dying.

[2] Page 139.

1784. was allowable at any time to depart from *Truth?*"
Ætat. 75. JOHNSON. "The general rule is, that Truth should never be violated, because it is of the utmost importance to the comfort of life, that we should have a full security by mutual faith; and occasional inconveniencies should be willingly suffered, that we may preserve it. There must, however, be some exceptions. If, for instance, a murderer should ask you which way a man is gone, you may tell him what is not true, because you are under a previous obligation not to betray a man to a murderer." BOSWELL. "Supposing the person who wrote *Junius* were asked whether he was the authour, might he deny it?" JOHNSON. "I don't know what to say to this. If you were *sure* that he wrote *Junius*, would you, if he denied it, think as well of him afterwards? Yet it may be urged, that what a man has no right to ask, you may refuse to communicate; and there is no other effectual mode of preserving a secret and an important secret, the discovery of which may be very hurtful to you, but a flat denial; for if you are silent, or hesitate, or evade, it will be held equivalent to a confession. But stay, Sir, here is another case. Supposing the authour had told me confidentially that he had written *Junius*, and I were asked if he had, I should hold myself at liberty to deny it, as being under a previous promise, express or implied, to conceal it. Now what I ought to do for the authour, may I not do for myself? But I deny the lawfulness of telling a lie to a sick man, for fear of alarming him. You have no business with consequences; you are to tell the truth. Besides, you are not sure, what effect your telling him that he is in danger may have. It may bring his distemper to a crisis, and that may

cure him. Of all lying, I have the greatest abhorrence of this, because I believe it has been frequently practised on myself." 1784. Ætat. 75.

I cannot help thinking that there is much weight in the opinion of those who have held, that truth, as an eternal and immutable principle, ought, upon no account whatever, to be violated, from supposed previous or superiour obligations, of which every man being to judge for himself, there is great danger that we too often, from partial motives, persuade ourselves that they exist; and probably whatever extraordinary instances may sometimes occur, where some evil may be prevented by violating this noble principle, it would be found that human happiness would, upon the whole, be more perfect, were Truth universally preserved.

In the notes to the "Dunciad," we find the following verses, addressed to Pope:[3]

"While malice, Pope, denies thy page
"Its own celestial fire;
"While criticks, and while bards in rage,
"Admiring, won't admire:

"While wayward pens thy worth assail,
"And envious tongues decry;
"These times, though many a friend bewail,
"These times bewail not I.

"But when the world's loud praise is thine,
"And spleen no more shall blame:
"When with thy Homer thou shalt shine
"In one establish'd fame!

[3] The annotator calls them "amiable verses."

1784. Ætat. 75.

"When none shall rail, and every lay
"Devote a wreath to thee;
"That day (for come it will) that day
"Shall I lament to see."

It is surely not a little remarkable, that they should appear without a name. Miss Seward, knowing Dr. Johnson's almost universal and minute literary information, signified a desire that I should ask him who was the authour. He was prompt with his answer:—"Why, Sir, they were written by one Lewis, who was either under-master or an usher of Westminster-school, and published a Miscellany, in which "Grongar Hill" first came out."[4] Johnson praised them

[4] Lewis's Verses addressed to Pope, (as Mr. Bindley suggests to me,) were first published in a collection of Pieces in verse and prose on occasion of "the Dunciad," 8vo. 1732. They are there called an Epigram.—"Grongar Hill," the same gentleman observes, was first printed in Savage's Miscellanies, as an *Ode*, (it is singular that Johnson should not have recollected this,) and was *reprinted* in the same year, (1726,) in Lewis's Miscellany, in the form it now bears.

In that Miscellany, (as the Reverend Mr. Blakeway observes to me,) "the beautiful poem, 'Away, let nought to love displeasing,' &c. (reprinted in Percy's RELIQUES, vol. i. b. iii. No. 14,) first appeared."

Lewis was author of "Philip of Macedon," a tragedy, published in 1727, and dedicated to Pope; and in 1730, he published a second volume of miscellaneous poems.

As Dr. Johnson settled in London not long after the Verses addressed to Pope first appeared, he probably then obtained some information concerning their authour, David Lewis, whom he has described as an Usher of Westminster-school: yet the Dean of Westminster, who has been pleased at my request to make some enquiry on this subject, has not found any vestige of his having ever been employed in this situation.—A late writer ("Environs of London," iv. 171,) supposed that the following inscription in th

highly, and repeated them with a noble animation. In the twelfth line, instead of "one establish'd fame," he repeated "one unclouded flame," which he thought was the reading in former editions: but I believe was a flash of his own genius. It is much more poetical than the other. 1784. Ætat. 75.

On Monday, June 14, and Tuesday, 15, Dr. Johnson and I dined, on one of them, I forget which, with Mr. Mickle, translator of the "Lusiad," at Wheatley, a very pretty country place a few miles from Oxford; and on the other with Dr. Wetherell, Master of University-College. From Dr. Wetherell's he went to visit Mr. Sackville Parker, the bookseller; and when he returned to us, gave the following account of his visit, saying, "I have been to see my old friend, Sack. Parker; I find he has married his maid; he has done right. She had lived with him many years in great confidence, and they had mingled minds; I do not think he could have found any wife

church-yard of the church of Low Leyton in Essex, was intended to commemorate this poet:

"Sacred to the memory of David Lewis, Esq. who died the 8th Day of April, 1760, aged 77 years; a great favourite of the Muses, as his many excellent pieces in poetry sufficiently testify.

"Inspired verse may on this marble live,
"But can no honour to thy ashes give."

- - - - Also Mary, the wife of the above-named David Lewis, fourth daughter of Newdigate Owsley, Esq. who departed this life the 10th of October, 1774, aged 90 years.

But it appears to me improbable that this monument was erected for the authour of the Verses to Pope, and of the Tragedy already mentioned; the language both of the dedication prefixed to that piece, and of the dedication addressed to the Earl of Shaftesbury, and prefixed to the Miscellanies, 1730, denoting a person who moved in a lower sphere than this Essex 'Squire seems to have done. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. that would have made him so happy. The woman was very attentive and civil to me; she pressed me to fix a day for dining with them, and to say what I liked, and she would be sure to get it for me. Poor Sack! He is very ill, indeed.[5] We parted as never to meet again. It has quite broke me down." This pathetick narrative was strangely diversified with the grave and earnest defence of a man's having married his maid. I could not but feel it as in some degree ludicrous.

In the morning of Tuesday, June 15, while we sat at Dr. Adams's, we talked of a printed letter from the reverend Herbert Croft, to a young gentleman who had been his pupil, in which he advised him to read to the end of whatever books he should begin to read. JOHNSON. "This is surely a strange advice; you may as well resolve that whatever men you happen to get acquainted with, you are to keep to them for life. A book may be good for nothing; or there may be only one thing in it worth knowing; are we to read it all through? These Voyages, (pointing to the three large volumes of 'Voyages to the South Sea,' which were just come out) *who* will read them through? A man had better work his way before the mast, than read them through; they will be eaten by rats and mice, before they are read through. There can be little entertainment in such books; one set of Savages is like another." BOSWELL. "I do not think the people of Otaheité can be reckoned Savages." JOHNSON. "Don't cant in defence of Savages." BOSWELL. "They have the art of navigation."—JOHNSON. "A dog or a cat can swim." BOSWELL. "They carve very ingeniously." JOHNSON.

[5] [He died at Oxford in his 89th year, Dec. 10, 1796. M.]

'A cat can scratch, and a child with a nail can scratch." I perceived this was none of the *mollia tempora fandi*; so desisted. 1784. Ætat. 75.

Upon his mentioning that when he came to College he wrote his first exercise twice over, but never did so afterwards; MISS ADAMS. "I suppose, Sir, you could not make them better?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Madam, to be sure, I could make them better. Thought is better than no thought." MISS ADAMS. "Do you, think, Sir, you could make your Ramblers better?" JOHNSON. "Certainly I could." BOSWELL. "I'll lay a bet, Sir, you cannot." JOHNSON. "But I will, Sir, if I choose. I shall make the best of them you shall pick out, better."—BOSWELL. "But you may add to them. I will not allow of that." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, there are three ways of making them better;—putting out,—adding,—or correcting."

During our visit at Oxford, the following conversation passed between him and me on the subject of my trying my fortune at the English bar. Having asked, whether a very extensive acquaintance in London, which was very valuable, and of great advantage to a man at large, might not be prejudicial to a lawyer, by preventing him from giving sufficient attention to his business?—JOHNSON. "Sir, you will attend to business, as business lays hold of you. When not actually employed, you may see your friends as much as you do now. You may dine at a Club every day, and sup with one of the members every night; and you may be as much at publick places as one who has seen them all would wish to be. But you must take care to attend constantly in Westminster Hall; both to mind your business, as it is almost all learnt there, (for nobody reads now,) and to shew that you want

1784. to have business. And you must not be too often
Ætat. 75. seen at publick places, that competitors may not have it to say, 'He is always at the Playhouse or at Ranelagh, and never to be found at his chambers.' And, Sir, there must be a kind of solemnity in the manner of a professional man. I have nothing particular to say to you on the subject. All this I should say to any one; I should have said it to Lord Thurlow twenty years ago."

THE PROFESSION may probably think this representation of what is required in a Barrister who would hope for success, to be much too indulgent; but certain it is, that as

"The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,"

some of the lawyers of this age who have risen high, have by no means thought it absolutely necessary to submit to that long and painful course of study which a Plowden, a Coke, and a Hale, considered as requisite. My respected friend, Mr. Langton, has shewn me in the hand-writing of his grandfather, a curious account of a conversation which he had with Lord Chief Justice Hale, in which that great man tells him, "That for two years after he came to the inn of court, he studied sixteen hours a day; however, (his Lordship added) that by this intense application he almost brought himself to his grave, though he were of a very strong constitution, and after reduced himself to eight hours; but that he would not advise any body to so much; that he thought six hours a day, with attention and constancy, was sufficient; that a man must use his body as he would his horse, and his stomach; not tire him at once, but rise with an appetite."

On Wednesday, June 19, Dr. Johnson and I returned to London; he was not well to-day, and said very little, employing himself chiefly in reading Euripides. He expressed some displeasure at me, for not observing sufficiently the various objects upon the road. "If I had your eyes, Sir, (said he) I should count the passengers." It was wonderful how accurate his observations of visual objects was, notwithstanding his imperfect eyesight, owing to a habit of attention.—That he was much satisfied with the respect paid to him at Dr. Adams's is thus attested by himself: "I returned last night from Oxford, after a fortnight's abode with Dr. Adams, who treated me as well as I could expect or wish; and he that contents a sick man, a man whom it is impossible to please, has surely done his part well."[6] 1784. Ætat 75.

After his return to London from this excursion, I saw him frequently, but have few memorandums; I shall therefore here insert some particulars which I collected at various times.

The Reverend Mr. Astle, of Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, brother to the learned and ingenious Thomas Astle, Esq. was from his early years known to Dr. Johnson, who obligingly advised him as to his studies, and recommended to him the following books, of which a list which he has been pleased to communicate, lies before me, in Johnson's own hand-writing:—*Universal History (ancient.)—Rollin's Ancient History—Puffendorf's Introduction to History.—Vertot's History of Knights of Malta.—Vertot's Revolution of Portugal.—Vertot's Revolution of Sweden.—Carte's History of England.—Present State of England.—Geo-*

[6] "Letters to Mrs. Thrale," Vol. II. p. 372.

1784. *graphical Grammar.—Prideaux's Connection.—Nel-*
Ætat. 75. *son's Feasts and Fasts.—Duty of Man.—Gentleman's Religion.—Clarendon's History.—Watts' Improvement of the Mind.—Watts's Logick.—Nature Displayed.—Lowth's English Grammar.—Blackwell on the Classicks.—Sherlock's Sermons.—Burnet's Life of Hale.—Dupin's History of the Church.—Shuckford's Connections.—Law's Serious Call.—Walton's Complete Angler.—Sandys's Travels.—Sprat's History of the Royal Society.—England's Gazetteer.—Goldsmith's Roman History.—Some Commentaries on the Bible.*

It having been mentioned to Dr. Johnson that a gentleman who had a son whom he imagined to have an extreme degree of timidity, resolved to send him to a publick school, that he might acquire confidence; —"Sir, (said Johnson,) this is a preposterous expedient for removing his infirmity; such a disposition should be cultivated in the shade. Placing him at a publick school is forcing an owl upon day."

Speaking of a gentleman whose house was much frequented by low company; "Rags, Sir, (said he,) will always make their appearance, where they have a right to do it."

Of the same gentleman's mode of living, he said, "Sir, the servants, instead of doing what they are bid, stand round the table in idle clusters, gaping upon the guests; and seem as unfit to attend a company, as to steer a man of war."

A dull country magistrate gave Johnson a long tedious account of his exercising his criminal jurisdiction, the result of which was his having sentenced four convicts to transportation. Johnson, in an agony of impatience to get rid of such a companion, exclaimed, "I heartily wish, Sir, that I were a fifth."

Johnson was present when a tragedy was read, in which there occurred this line: 1784. Ætat. 75.

"Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free."

The company having admired it much, "I cannot agree with you (said Johnson:) It might as well be said,

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

He was pleased with the kindness of Mr. Cator, who was joined with him in Mr. Thrale's important trust, and thus describes him:[7] "There is much good in his character, and much usefulness in his knowledge." He found a cordial solace at that gentleman's seat at Beckenham, in Kent, which is indeed one of the finest places at which I ever was a guest; and where I find more and more a hospitable welcome.

Johnson seldom encouraged general censure of any profession; but he was willing to allow a due share of merit to the various departments necessary in civilised life. In a splenetick, sarcastical, or jocular frame of mind, however, he would sometimes utter a pointed saying of that nature. One instance has been mentioned,[8] where he gave a sudden satirical stroke to the character of an *attorney*. The too indiscriminate admission to that employment, which requires both abilities and integrity, has given rise to injurious reflections, which are totally inapplicable to many very respectable men who exercise it with reputation and honour.

[7] "Letters to Mrs. Thrale," Vol. II. p. 284.

[8] See Vol. II. p. 126.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

1784. Ætat. 75. Johnson having argued for some time with a pertinacious gentleman; his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, "I don't understand you, Sir;" upon which Johnson observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

Talking to me of Horry Walpole, (as Horace late Earl of Orford was often called,) Johnson allowed that he got together a great many curious little things, and told them in an elegant manner. Mr. Walpole thought Johnson a more amiable character after reading his Letters to Mrs. Thrale: but never was one of the true admirers of that great man.[9] We may suppose a prejudice conceived, if he ever heard Johnson's account to Sir George Staunton, that when he made the speeches in parliament for the Gentleman's Magazine, "he always took care to put Sir Robert Walpole in the wrong, and to say every thing he could against the electorate of Hanover." The celebrated Heroick Epistle, in which Johnson is satyrically introduced, has been ascribed both to Mr. Walpole and Mr. Mason. One day at Mr. Courtenay's, when a gentleman expressed his opinion that there was more energy in that poem than could be expected from Mr. Walpole; Mr. Warton, the late Laureat, observed, "It may have been written by Walpole, and *buckram'd* by Mason."[1]

He disapproved of Lord Hailes, for having modernised the language of the ever-memorable John Hales of Eton, in an edition which his Lordship published

[9] [In his Posthumous Works, he has spoken of Johnson in the most contemptuous manner! M.]

[1] [It is now (1804) *known*, that the "Heroick Epistle" was written by Mason. M.]

of that writer's works. "An authour's language, Sir, (said he,) is a characteristical part of his composition, and is also characteristical of the age in which he writes. Besides, Sir, when the language is changed we are not sure that the sense is the same. No, Sir: I am sorry Lord Hailes has done this." 1784. Ætat. 75.

Here it may be observed, that his frequent use of the expression, *No, Sir,* was not always to intimate contradiction; for he would say so when he was about to enforce an affirmative proposition which had not been denied, as in the instance last mentioned. I used to consider it as a kind of flag of defiance: as if he had said, "Any argument you may offer against this, is not just. No, Sir, it is not." It was like Falstaff's "I deny your Major."

Sir Joshua Reynolds having said that he took the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and his wit, and of his understanding by the remarks which he repeated; being always sure that he must be a weak man, who quotes common things with an emphasis as if they were oracles;—Johnson agreed with him; and Sir Joshua having also observed that the real character of a man was found out by his amusements, —Johnson added, "Yes, Sir; no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

I have mentioned Johnson's general aversion to pun. He once, however, endured one of mine. When we were talking of a numerous company in which he had distinguished himself highly, I said, "Sir, you were a COD surrounded by smelts. Is not this enough for you? at a time too when you were not *fishing* for a compliment?" He laughed at this with a complacent approbation. Old Mr. Sheridan observed, upon my mentioning it to him, "He liked

1784. Ætat. 75. your compliment so well, he was willing to take it with *pun sauce*." For my own part I think no innocent species of wit or pleasantry should be suppressed: and that a good pun may be admitted among the smaller excellencies of lively conversation.

Had Johnson treated at large *De Claris Oratoribus*, he might have given us an admirable work. When the Duke of Bedford attacked the ministry as vehemently as he could, for having taken upon them to extend the time for the importation of corn, Lord Chatham, in his first speech in the House of Lords, boldly avowed himself to be an adviser of that measure. "My colleagues, (said he,) as I was confined by indisposition, did me the signal honour of coming to the bed-side of a sick man, to ask his opinion. But, had they not thus condescended, I should have *taken up my bed and walked*, in order to have delivered that opinion at the Council-Board." Mr. Langton, who was present, mentioned this to Johnson, who observed, "Now, Sir, we see that he took these words as he found them; without considering, that though the expression in Scripture, *take up thy bed and walk*, strictly suited the instance of the sick man restored to health and strength, who would of course be supposed to carry his bed with him, it could not be proper in the case of a man who was lying in a state of feebleness, and who certainly would not add to the difficulty of moving at all, that of carrying his bed."

When I pointed out to him in the newspaper one of Mr. Grattan's animated and glowing speeches, in favour of the freedom of Ireland, in which this expression occurred (I know not if accurately taken): "We will persevere, till there is not one link of

the English chain left to clank upon the rags of the meanest beggar in Ireland;" — "Nay, Sir, (said Johnson,) don't you perceive that *one* link cannot clank?" 1784. Ætat. 75.

Mrs. Thrale has published,[2] as Johnson's, a kind of parody or counterpart of a fine poetical passage in one of Mr. Burke's speeches on American Taxation. It is vigorously but somewhat coarsely executed; and I am inclined to suppose, is not quite correctly exhibited. I hope he did not use the words "*vile agents*" for the Americans in the House of Parliament; and if he did so, in an extempore effusion, I wish the lady had not committed it to writing.

Mr. Burke uniformly shewed Johnson the greatest respect; and when Mr. Townshend, now lord Sydney, at a period when he was conspicuous in opposition, threw out some reflection in parliament upon the grant of a pension to a man of such political principles as Johnson; Mr. Burke, though then of the same party with Mr. Townshend, stood warmly forth in defence of his friend, to whom, he justly observed, the pension was granted solely on account of his eminent literary merit. I am well assured, that Mr. Townshend's attack upon Johnson was the occasion of his "hitching in a rhyme;" for, that in the original copy of Goldsmith's character of Mr. Burke, in his "Retaliation," another person's name stood in the couplet where Mr. Townshend is now introduced:

"Though fraught with all learning kept straining
his throat,
"To persuade *Tommy Townshend* to lend him a
vote."

[2] "Anecdotes," p. 43.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

1784. Ætat. 75.

It may be worth remakring, among the *minutiæ* of my collection, that Johnson was once drawn to serve in the militia, the Trained Bands of the City of London, and that Mr. Rackstrow, of the Museum in Fleet-street, was his Colonel. It may be believed he did not serve in person; but the idea, with all its circumstances, is certainly laughable. He upon that occasion provided himself with a musket, and with a sword and belt, which I have seen hanging in his closet.

He was very constant to those whom he once employed, if they gave him no reason to be displeased. When somebody talked of being imposed on in the purchase of tea and sugar, and such articles: "That will not be the case, (said he,) if you go to a *stately shop*, as I always do. In such a shop it is not worth their while to take a petty advantage."

An authour of most anxious and restless vanity being mentioned, "Sir, (said he,) there is not a young sapling upon Parnassus more severely blown about by every wind of criticism than that poor fellow."

The difference, he observed, between a well-bred and an ill-bred man is this: "One immediately attracts your liking, the other your aversion. You love the one till you find reason to hate him; you hate the other till you find reason to love him."

The wife of one of his acquaintance had fraudulently made a purse for herself out of her husband's fortune. Feeling a proper compunction in her last moments, she confessed how much she had secreted; but before she could tell where it was placed, she was seized with a convulsive fit and expired. Her husband said, he was more hurt by her want of con-

fidence in him, than by the loss of his money. "I told him, (said Johnson,) that he should console himself: for *perhaps* the money might be *found*, and he was *sure* that his wife was *gone*." 1784. Ætat. 75.

A foppish physician once reminded Johnson of his having been in company with him on a former occasion, "I do not remember it, Sir." The physician still insisted; adding that he that day wore so fine a coat that it must have attracted his notice. "Sir, (said Johnson,) had you been dipt in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you."

He seemed to take a pleasure in speaking in his own style; for when he had carelessly missed it, he would repeat the thought translated into it. Talking of the Comedy of "The Rehearsal," he said, "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet." This was easy;—he therefore caught himself, and pronounced a more round sentence; "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."

He censured a writer of entertaining Travels for assuming a feigned character, saying, (in his sense of the word,) "He carries out one lye; we know not how many he brings back." At another time, talking of the same person, he observed, "Sir, your assent to a man whom you have never known to falsify, is a debt: but after you have known a man to falsify, your assent to him then is a favour."

Though he had no taste for painting, he admired much the manner in which Sir Joshua Reynolds treated of his art, in his "Discourses to the Royal Academy." He observed one day of a passage in them, "I think I might as well have said this myself:" and once when Mr. Langton was sitting by him, he read one of them very eagerly, and expressed

1784. Ætat. 75. himself thus: "Very well, Master Reynolds; very well, indeed. But it will not be understood."

When I observed to him that Painting was so far inferior to Poetry, that the story or even emblem which it communicates must be previously known, and mentioned as a natural and laughable instance of this, that a little Miss on seeing a picture of Justice with the scales, had exclaimed to me, "See, there's a woman selling sweetmeats;" he said, "Painting, Sir, can illustrate, but cannot inform."

No man was more ready to make an apology when he had censured unjustly, than Johnson. When a proof-sheet of one of his works was brought to him, he found fault with the mode in which a part of it was arranged, refused to read it, and in a passion desired that the compositor[3] might be sent to him. The compositor was Mr. Manning, a decent sensible man, who had composed about one half of his "Dictionary," when in Mr. Strahan's printing-house; and a great part of his "Lives of the Poets," when in that of Mr. Nichols; and who (in his seventy-seventh year) when in Mr. Baldwin's printing-house, composed a part of the first edition of this work concerning him. By producing the manuscript, he at once satisfied Dr. Johnson that he was not to blame. Upon which Johnson candidly and earnestly said to him, "Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon; Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon, again and again."

His generous humanity to the miserable was al-

[3] Compositor in the Printing-house means, the person who adjusts the types in the order in which they are to stand for printing; and arranges what is called the *form*, from which an impression is taken.

most beyond example. The following instance is well attested: Coming home late one night, he found a poor woman lying in the street, so much exhausted that she could not walk; he took her upon his back, and carried her to his house, where he discovered that she was one of those wretched females who had fallen into the lowest state of vice, poverty, and disease. Instead of harshly upbraiding her, he had her taken care of with all tenderness for a long time, at a considerable expence, till she was restored to health, and endeavoured to put her into a virtuous way of living.[4] 1784. Ætat. 75.

He thought Mr. Caleb Whitefoord singularly happy in hitting on the signature of *Papyrius Cursor*, to his ingenious and diverting cross-readings of the newspapers; it being a real name of an ancient Roman, and clearly expressive of the thing done in this lively conceit.

He once in his life was known to have uttered what is called a *bull*: Sir Joshua Reynolds, when they were riding together in Devonshise, complained that he had a very bad horse, for that even when going down hill he moved slowly step by step. "Ay (said Johnson,) and when he *goes* up hill, he *stands still*."

He had a great aversion to gesticulating in company. He called once to a gentleman who offended him in that point, 'Don't *attitudenise*." And when another gentleman thought he was giving additional force to what he uttered, by expressive movements

[4] The circumstance therefore alluded to in Mr. Courtenay's "Poetical Character" of him is strictly true. My informer was Mrs. Desmoulins, who lived many years in Dr. Johnson's house.

1784. of his hands, Johnson fairly seized them, and held
Ætat. 75. them down.

An authour of considerable eminence having engrossed a good share of the conversation in the company of Johnson, and having said nothing but what was trifling and insignificant; Johnson when he was gone, observed to us, "It is wonderful what a difference there sometimes is between a man's powers of writing and of talking. ****** writes with great spirit, but is a poor talker; had he held his tongue, we might have supposed him to have been restrained by modesty; but he has spoken a great deal to-day; and have you heard what stuff it was."

A gentleman having said that a *congé d'elire* has not, perhaps, the force of a command, but may be considered only as a strong recommendation;— "Sir, (replied Johnson, who overheard him,) it is such a recommendation, as if I should throw you out of a two pair of stairs window, and recommend to you to fall soft."[5]

Mr. Steevens, who passed many a social hour with him during their long acquaintance, which commenced when they both lived in the Temple, has preserved a good number of particulars concerning him, most of which are to be found in the department of Apophthegms, &c. in the Collection of "Johnson's Works." But he has been pleased to favour me with the following, which are original:

"One evening, previous to the trial of Baretti, a consultation of his friends was held at the house of

[5] This has been printed in other publications, "fall *to the ground*." But Johnson himself gave me the true expression which he had used as above; meaning that the recommendation left as little choice in the one case as the other.

Mr. Cox, the solicitor, in Southampton-buildings, Chancery-lane. Among others present were, Mr. Burke and Dr. Johnson, who differed in sentiments concerning the tendency of some part of the defence the prisoner was to make. When the meeting was over, Mr. Steevens observed, that the question between him and his friend had been agitated with rather too much warmth. 'It may be so, Sir, (replied the Doctor,) for Burke and I should have been of one opinion, if we had had no audience."

1784. Ætat. 75.

"Dr. Johnson once assumed a character in which perhaps even Mr. Boswell never saw him. His curiosity having been excited by the praises bestowed on the celebrated Torré's fireworks at Marybone-Gardens, he desired Mr. Steevens to accompany him thither. The evening had proved showery; and soon after the few people present were assembled, publick notice was given, that the conductors to the wheels, suns, stars, &c. were so thoroughly water-soaked, that it was impossible any part of the exhibition should be made. 'This is a mere excuse, (says the Doctor,) to save their crackers for a more profitable company. Let us both hold up our sticks, and threaten to break those coloured lamps that surround the Orchestra, and we shall soon have our wishes gratified. The core of the fire-works cannot be injured; let the different pieces be touched in their respective centers, and they will do their offices as well as ever.'—Some young men who overheard him, immediately began the violence he had recommended, and an attempt was speedily made to fire some of the wheels which appeared to have received the smallest damage; but to little purpose were they lighted, for most of them completely failed.—The

1784. Ætat. 75. authour of 'The Rambler,' however, may be considered on this occasion, as the ringleader of a successful riot, though not as a skilful pyrotechnist."

"It has been supposed that Dr. Johnson, so far as fashion was concerned, was careless of his appearance in publick. But this is not altogether true, as the following slight instance may show:—Goldsmith's last Comedy was to be represented during some court-mourning; and Mr. Steevens appointed to call on Dr. Johnson, and carry him to the tavern where he was to dine with others of the Poet's friends. The Doctor was ready dressed, but in coloured cloaths; yet being told that he would find every one else in black, received the intelligence with a profusion of thanks, hastened to change his attire, all the while repeating his gratitude for the information that had saved him from an appearance so improper in the front row of a front box. 'I would not (added he,) for ten pounds, have seemed so retrograde to any general observance.'"

"He would sometimes found his dislikes on very slender circumstances. Happening one day to mention Mr. Flexman, a Dissenting Minister, with some compliment to his exact memory in chronological matters; the Doctor replied, 'Let me hear no more of him, Sir. That is the fellow who made the Index to my Ramblers, and set down the name of Milton thus:—Milton, *Mr*. John.'"

Mr. Steevens adds this testimony: "It is unfortunate, however, for Johnson, that his particularities and frailties can be more distinctly traced than his good and amiable exertions. Could the many bounties be studiously concealed, the many acts of humanity he performed in private, be displayed with equal

circumstantiality, his defects would be so far lost in the blaze of his virtues, that the latter only would be regarded." 1784. Ætat. 75.

Though from my very high admiration of Johnson, I have wondered that he was not courted by all the great and all the eminent persons of his time, it ought fairly to be considered, that no man of humble birth, who lived entirely by literature, in short no authour by profession, ever rose in this country into that personal notice which he did. In the course of this work a numerous variety of names has been mentioned, to which many might be added. I cannot omit Lord and Lady Lucan, at whose house he often enjoyed all that an elegant table and the best company can contribute to happiness; he found hospitality united with extraordinary accomplishments, and embellished with charms of which no man could be insensible.

On Tuesday, June 22, I dined with him at THE LITERARY CLUB, the last time of his being in that respectable society. The other members present were the Bishop of St. Asaph, Lord Eliot, Lord Palmerston, Dr. Fordyce, and Mr. Malone. He looked ill; but had such a manly fortitude, that he did not trouble the company with melancholy complaints. They all shewed evident marks of kind concern about him, with which he was much pleased, and he exerted himself to be as entertaining as his indisposition allowed him.

The anxiety of his friends to preserve so estimable a life, as long as human means might be supposed to have influence, made them plan for him a retreat from the severity of a British winter, to the mild

1784. Ætat. 75. climate of Italy. This scheme was at last brought to a serious resolution at General Paoli's, where I had often talked of it. One essential matter, however, I understood was necessary to be previously settled, which was obtaining such an addition to his income, as would be sufficient to enable him to defray the expence in a manner becoming the first literary character of a great nation, and, independent of all his other merits, the Authour of THE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. The person to whom I above all others thought I should apply to negociate this business, was the Lord Chancellor,[6] because I knew that he highly valued Johnson, and that Johnson highly valued his Lordship; so that it was no degradation of my illustrious friend to solicit for him the favour of such a man. I have mentioned what Johnson said of him to me when he was at the bar; and after his Lordship was advanced to the seals, he said of him, "I would prepare myself for no man in England but Lord Thurlow. When I am to meet with him, "I should wish to know a day before." How he would have prepared himself, I cannot conjecture. Would he have selected certain topicks, and considered them in every view, so as to be in readiness to argue them at all points? and what may we suppose those topicks to have been? I once started the curious enquiry to the great man who was the subject of this compliment: he smiled, but did not pursue it.

I first consulted with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who perfectly coincided in opinion with me; and I therefore, though personally very little known to his

[6] Edward Lord Thurlow, [who died September 11, 1806. M.]

Lordship, wrote to him,[7] stating the case, and requesting his good offices for Dr. Johnson. I mentioned that I was obliged to set out for Scotland early in the following week, so that if his Lordship should have any commands for me as to this pious negociation, he would be pleased to send them before that time; otherwise Sir Joshua Reynolds would give all attention to it. 1784. Ætat. 75.

This application was made not only without any suggestion on the part of Johnson himself, but was utterly unknown to him, nor had he the smallest suspicion of it. Any insinuations, therefore, which since his death have been thrown out, as if he had stooped to ask what was superfluous, are without any foundation. But, had he asked it, it would not have been superfluous; for though the money he had saved proved to be more than his friends imagined, or than I believe he himself, in his carelessness concerning wordly matters, knew it to be, had he travelled upon the Continent, an augmentation of his income would by no means have been unnecessary.

On Wednesday, June 23, I visited him in the morning, after having been present at the shocking sight of fifteen men executed before Newgate. I said to him, I was sure that human life was not machinery, that is to say, a chain of fatality planned and directed by the Supreme Being, as it had in it so much wickedness and misery, so many instances of both, as that by which my mind was now clouded.

[7] It is strange that Sir John Hawkins should have related that the application was made by Sir Joshua Reynolds, when he could so easily have been informed of the truth by enquiring of Sir Joshua, Sir John's carelessness to ascertain facts is very remarkable.

1784. Were it machinery, it would be better than it is in
Ætat. 75. these respects, though less noble, as not being a system of moral government. He agreed with me now, as he always did, upon the great question of the liberty of the human will, which has been in all ages perplexed with so much sophistry, "But, Sir, as to the doctrine of Necessity, no man believes it. If a man should give me arguments that I do not see, though I could not answer them, should I believe that I do not see?" It will be observed, that Johnson at all times made the just distinction between doctrines *contrary* to reason, and doctrines *above* reason.

Talking of the religious discipline proper for unhappy convicts, he said, "Sir, one of our regular clergy will probably not impress their minds sufficiently: they should be attended by a Methodist preacher;[8] or a Popish priest." Let me however observe, in justice to the Reverend Mr. Vilette, who has been Ordinary of Newgate for no less than eighteen years, in the course of which he has attended many hundreds of wretched criminals, that his earnest and humane exhortations have been very effectual. His extraordinary diligence is highly praise-worthy, and merits a distinguished reward.[9]

On Thursday, June 24, I dined with him at Mr Dilly's, where were the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Knox,

[8] A friend of mine happened to be passing by a *field congregation* in the environs of London, when a Methodist preacher quoted this passage with triumph.

[9] I trust that THE CITY OF LONDON, now happily in unison with THE COURT, will have the justice and generosity to obtain preferment for this Reverend Gentleman, now a worthy old servant of that magnificent Corporation.

master of Tunbridge-school, Mr. Smith, Vicar of Southill, Dr. Beatie, Mr. Pinkerton, authour of various literary performances, and the Rev. Dr. Mayo. At my desire old Mr. Sheridan was invited, as I was earnest to have Johnson and him brought together again by chance, that a reconcilation might be effected. Mr. Sheridan happened to come early, and having learnt that Dr. Johnson was to be there, went away; so I found, with sincere regret, that my friendly intentions were hopeless. I recollect nothing that passed this day, except Johnson's quickness, who, when Dr. Beattie observed, as something remarkable which had happened to him, that he had chanced to see both No. 1, and No. 1000, of the hackney-coaches, the first and the last; "Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) there is an equal chance for one's seeing those two numbers as any other two. He was clearly right; yet the seeing of the two extremes, each of which is in some degree more conspicuous than the rest, could not but strike one in a stronger manner than the sight of any other two numbers.—Though I have neglected to preserve his conversation, it was perhaps at this interview that Dr. Knox formed the notion of it which he has exhibited in his "Winter Evenings."

On Friday, June 25, I dined with him at General Paoli's, where, he says in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, "I love to dine." There was a variety of dishes much to his taste, of all which he seemed to me to eat so much, that I was afraid he might be hurt by it; and I whispered to the General my fear, and begged he might not press him. "Alas! (said the General,) see how very ill he looks; he can live but a very short time. Would you refuse any slight

1784. gratifications to a man under sentence of death?
Ætat. 75. There is a humane custom in Italy, by which persons in that melancholy situation are indulged with having whatever they like best to eat and drink, even with expensive delicacies."

I shewed him some verses on Lichfield by Miss Seward, which I had that day received from her, and had the pleasure to hear him approve of them. He confirmed to me the truth of a high compliment which I had been told he had paid to that lady, when she mentioned to him "The Colombiade," an epick poem, by Madame du Boccage:—Madam, there is not any thing equal to your description of the sea round the North Pole, in your Ode on the death of Captain Cooke."

On Sunday, June 27, I found him rather better. I mentioned to him a young man who was going to Jamaica with his wife and children, in expectation of being provided for by two of her brothers settled in that island, one a clergyman, and the other a physician. Johnson. "It is a wild scheme, Sir, unless he has a positive and deliberate invitation. There was a poor girl, who used to come about me, who had a cousin in Barbadoes, that, in a letter to her, expressed a wish she should come out to that Island, and expatiated on the comforts and happiness of her situation. The poor girl went out: her cousin was much surprized, and asked her how she could think of coming. 'Because, (said she,) you invited me.'—'Not I,' answered the cousin. The letter was then produced. 'I see it is true, (said she,) that I did invite you: but I did not think you would come.' They lodged her in an out-house, where she passed her time miserably; and as soon as she

had an opportunity she returned to England. Always tell this, when you hear of people going abroad to relations, upon a notion of being well received. In the case which you mention, it is probable the clergyman spends all he gets, and the physician does not know how much he is to get." 1784. Ætat. 75

We this day dined at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, with General Paoli, Lord Eliot, (formerly Mr. Eliot, of Port Eliot,) Dr. Beattie, and some other company. Talking of Lord Chesterfield;—Johnson. "His manner was exquisitely elegant, and he had more knowledge than I expected." Boswell. "Did you find, Sir, his conversation to be of a superiour style." Johnson. "Sir, in the conversation which I had with him I had the best right to superiority, for it was upon philology and literature." Lord Eliot, who had travelled at the same time with Mr. Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's natural son, justly observed, that it was strange that a man who shewed he had so much affection for his son as Lord Chesterfield did, by writing so many long and anxious letters to him, almost all of them when he was Secretary of State, which certainly was a proof of great goodness of disposition, should endeavour to make his son a rascal. His Lordship told us, that Foote had intended to bring on the stage a father who had thus tutored his son, and to shew the son an honest man to every one else, but practising his father's maxims upon him, and cheating him. Johnson. "I am much pleased with this design; but I think there was no occasion to make the son honest at all. No; he should be a consummate rogue: the contrast between honesty and knavery would be the stronger. It should be contrived so that the father should be the only suf-

1784. Ætat. 75. ferer by the son's villainy, and thus there would be poetical prejudice.

He put Lord Eliot in mind of Dr. Walter Harte. "I know, (said he,) Harte was your Lordship's tutor, and he was also tutor to the Peterborough family. Pray, my Lord, do you recollect any particulars that he told you of Lord Peterborough? He is a favourite of mine, and is not enough known; his character has been only ventilated in party pamphlets." Lord Eliot said, if Dr. Johnson would be so good as to ask him any questions, he would tell what he could recollect. Accordingly some things were mentioned. "But, (said his Lordship,) the best account of Lord Peterborough that I have happened to meet with, is in, 'Captain Carleton's Memoirs.' Carleton was descended of an ancestor who had distinguished himself at the siege of Derry. He was an officer; and, what was rare at that time, had some knowledge of engineering." Johnson said, he had never heard of the book. Lord Eliot had it at Port Eliot; but, after a good deal of enquiry, procured a copy in London, and sent it to Johnson, who told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he was going to bed when it came, but was so much pleased with it, that he sat up till he had read it through, and found in it such an air of truth, that he could not doubt of its authenticity; adding, with a smile, (in allusion to Lord Eliot's having recently been raised to the peerage,) 'I did not think a *young Lord* could have mentioned to me a book in the English history that was not known to me."

An addition to our company came after we went up to the drawing room; Dr. Johnson seemed to rise in spirits as his audience increased. He said,

"He wished Lord Orford's pictures, and Sir Ashton Lever's Museum, might be purchased by the publick, because both the money, and the pictures, and the curiosities would remain in the country; whereas if they were sold into another kingdom, the nation would indeed get some money, but would lose the pictures and curiosities, which it would be desirable we should have, for improvement in taste and natural history. The only question was, as the nation was much in want of money, whether it would not be better to take a large price from a foreign State?" 1784. Ætat. 75.

He entered upon a curious discussion of the difference between intuition and sagacity; one being immediate in its effect, the other requiring a circuitous process; one he observed was the *eye* of the mind, the other the *nose* of the mind.

A young gentleman present took up the argument against him, and maintained that no man ever thinks of the *nose of the mind*, not adverting that though that figurative sense seems strange to us, as very unusual, it is truly not more forced than Hamlet's "In my *mind's eye*, Horatio." He persisted much too long, and appeared to Johnson as putting himself forward as his antagonist with too much presumption: upon which he called to him in a loud tone, "What is it you are contending for, if you *be* contending?" —And afterwards imagining that the gentleman retorted upon him with a kind of smart drollery, he said, "Mr. *****, it does not become you to talk so to me. Besides, ridicule is not your talent; you have *there* neither intuition nor sagacity."—The gentleman protested that he had intended no improper

1784. Ætat. 75. freedom, but had the greatest respect for Dr. Johnson. After a short pause, during which we were somewhat uneasy.—Johnson. "Give me your hand, Sir. You were too tedious, and I was too short. Mr. *****, "Sir, I am honoured by your attention in any way." Johnson. "Come, Sir, let's have no more of it. We offended one another by our contention; let us not offend the company by our compliments."

He now said, "He wished much to go to Italy, and that he dreaded passing the winter in England." I said nothing; but enjoyed a secret satisfaction in thinking that I had taken the most effectual measures to make such a scheme practicable.

On Monday, June 28, I had the honour to receive from the Lord Chancellor the following letter:

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"SIR,

"I should have answered your letter immediately; if, (being much engaged when I received it) I had not put it in my pocket, and forgot to open it till this morning.

"I am much obliged to you for the suggestion; and I will adopt and press it as far as I can. The best argument, I am sure, and I hope it is not likely to fail, is Dr. Johnson's merit.—But it will be necessary, if I should be so unfortunate as to miss seeing you, to converse with Sir Joshua on the sum it will be proper to ask,—in short, upon the means of setting him out. It would be a reflection on us all, if such

a man should perish for want of the means to take care of his health. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"Your's, &c.

"Thurlow."

This letter gave me a very high satisfaction; I next day went and shewed it to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was exceedingly pleased with it. He thought that I should now communicate the negociation to Dr. Johnson, who might afterwards complain if the attention with which he had been honoured, should be too long concealed from him. I intended to set out for Scotland next morning; but Sir Joshua cordially insisted that I should stay another day, that Johnson and I might dine with him, that we three might talk of his Italian Tour, and, as Sir Joshua expressed himself, "have it all out." I hastened to Johnson, and was told by him that he was rather better to-day. Boswell. "I am very anxious about you, Sir, and particularly that you should go to Italy for the winter, which I believe is your own wish." Johnson. "It is, Sir." Boswell. "You have no objection, I presume, but the money it would require." Johnson. "Why, no, Sir."—Upon which I gave him a particular account of what had been done, and read to him the Lord Chancellor's letter. —He listened with much attention; then warmly said, "This is taking prodigious pains about a man." —"O, Sir, (said I, with most sincere affection,) your friends would do every thing for you." He paused,—grew more and more agitated,—till tears started into his eyes, and he exclaimed with fervent emotion, "God bless you all." I was so affected

1784. Ætat. 75. that I also shed tears.—After a short silence, he renewed and extended his grateful benediction, "GOD bless you all, for JESUS CHRIST's sake." We both remained for some time unable to speak.—He rose suddenly and quitted the room, quite melted in tenderness. He staid but a short time, till he had recovered his firmness; soon after he returned I left him, having first engaged him to dine at Sir Joshua Reynolds's next day.—I never was again under that roof which I had so long reverenced.

On Wednesday, June 30, the friendly confidential dinner with Sir Joshua Reynolds took place, no other company being present. Had I known that this was the last time that I should enjoy in this world, the conversation of a friend whom I so much respected, and from whom I derived so much instruction and entertainment, I should have been deeply affected. When I now look back to it, I am vexed that a single word should have been forgotten.

Both Sir Joshua and I were so sanguine in our expectations, that we expatiated with confidence on the liberal provision which we were sure would be made for him, conjecturing whether munificence would be displayed in one large donation, or in an ample increase of his pension. He himself catched so much of our enthusiasm, as to allow himself to suppose it not impossible that our hopes might in one way or other be realised. He said that he would rather have his pension doubled than a grant of a thousand pounds; "For, (said he,) though probably I may not live to receive as much as a thousand pounds, a man would have the consciousness that he should pass the remainder of his life in splendour, how long soever it might be." Considering what a moderate

proportion an income of six hundred pounds a year 1784.
bears to innumerable fortunes in this country, it is Ætat. 75.
worthy of remark, that a man so truly great should think it splendour.

As an instance of extraordinary liberality of friendship, he told us, that Dr. Brocklesby had upon this occasion offered him a hundred a year for his life. A grateful tear started into his eye, as he spoke this in a faultering tone.

Sir Joshua and I endeavoured to flatter his imagination with agreeable prospects of happiness in Italy. "Nay, (said he,) I must not expect much of that; when a man goes to Italy merely to feel how he breathes the air, he can enjoy very little."

Our conversation turned upon living in the country, which Johnson, whose melancholy mind required the dissipation of quick successive variety, had habituated himself to consider as a kind of mental imprisonment. "Yet, Sir, (said I,) there are many people who are content to live in the country." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is in the intellectual world as in the physical world: we are told by natural philosophers that a body is at rest in the place that is fit for it; they who are content to live in the country, are *fit* for the country."

Talking of various enjoyments, I argued that a refinement of taste was a disadvantage, as they who have attained to it must be seldomer pleased than those who have no nice discrimination, and are therefore satisfied with every thing that comes in their way. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir; that is a paltry notion. Endeavour to be as perfect as you can in every respect."

I accompanied him in Sir Joshua Reynolds's coach,

1784. Ætat. 75. to the entry of Bolt court. He asked me whether I would not go with him to his house; I declined it, from an apprehension that my spirits would sink. We bade adieu to each other affectionately in the carriage. When he had got down upon the foot-pavement, he called out, "Fare you well;" and without looking back, sprung away with a kind of pathetick briskness, if I may use that expression, which seemed to indicate a struggle to conceal uneasiness, and impressed me with a foreboding of our long, long separation.

I remained one day more in town, to have the chance of talking over my negociation with the Lord Chancellor; but the multiplicity of his Lordship's important engagements did not allow of it; so I left the management of the business in the hands of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Soon after this time Dr. Johnson had the mortification of being informed by Mrs. Thrale, that, "what she supposed he never believed,"[1] was true; namely, that she was actually going to marry Signor Piozzi, an Italian musick-master. He endeavoured to prevent it; but in vain. If she would publish the whole of the correspondence that passed between Dr. Johnson and her on the subject, we should have a full view of his real sentiments. As it is, our judgement must be biassed by that characteristick specimen which Sir John Hawkins has given us: "Poor Thrale, I thought that either her virtue or her vice would have restrained her from such a marriage. She is now become a subject for her enemies to exult over; and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget, or pity."[2]

[1] "Letters to Mrs. Thrale," Vol. II. page 375.

[2] Dr. Johnson's Letter to Sir John Hawkins, "Life," p. 570.

It must be admitted that Johnson derived a considerable portion of happiness from the comforts and elegancies which he enjoyed in Mr. Thrale's family; but Mrs. Thrale assures us he was indebted for these to her husband alone, who certainly respected him sincerely. Her words are, *Veneration for his virtue, reverence for his talents,* delight *in his conversation, and* habitual endurance of a yoke my husband first put upon me, *and of which he contentedly bore his share for sixteen or seventeen years, made me go on so long with* Mr. Johnson; *but the perpetual confinement I will own to have been* terrifying *in the first years of our friendship, and* irksome *in the last; nor could I pretend to* support *it without help, when my coadjutor was no more.*"[3] Alas! how different is this from the declarations which I have heard Mrs. Thrale make in his life time, without a single murmur against any peculiarities, or against any one circumstance which attended their intimacy. 1784. Ætat. 75.

As a sincere friend of the great man whose Life I am writing, I think it necessary to guard my readers against the mistaken notion of Dr. Johnson's character, which this lady's "Anecdotes" of him suggest; for from the very nature and form of her book, "it lends deception lighter wings to fly."

"Let it be remembered, (says an eminent critick,[4] that she has comprised in a small volume all that she could recollect of Dr. Johnson in *twenty years*, during which period, doubtless, some severe things were said by him; and they who read the book in *two hours*, naturally enough suppose that his whole con-

[3] "Anecdotes," p. 293.

[4] Who has been pleased to furnish me with his remarks.

1784. versation was of this complexion. But the fact is, I
Ætat. 75. have been often in his company, and never *once* heard him say a severe thing to any one; and many others can attest the same. When he did say a severe thing, it was generally extorted by ignorance pretending to knowledge, or by extreme vanity or affectation.

"Two instances of inaccuracy, (adds he,) are peculiarly worthy of notice:

"It is said,[5] '*That natural roughness of his manner so often mentioned, would, notwithstanding the regularity of his notions, burst through them all from time to time; and he once bade a very celebrated lady, who praised him with too much zeal perhaps, or perhaps too strong an emphasis, (which always offended him,) consider what her flattery was worth, before she choaked him with it.*'

"Now let the genuine anecdote be contrasted with this.—The person thus represented as being harshly treated, though a very celebrated lady, was *then* just come to London from an obscure situation in the country. At Sir Joshua Reynolds's one evening, she met Dr. Johnson. She very soon began to pay her court to him in the most fulsome strain. 'Spare me, I beseech you, dear Madam,' was his reply. She still *laid it on*. 'Pray, Madam,' let us have no more of this; he rejoined. Not paying any attention to these warnings, she continued still her eulogy. At length, provoked by this indelicate and *vain* obtrusion of compliment, he exclaimed, 'Dearest lady, consider with yourself what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely.'

"How different does this story appear, when ac-

[5] "Anecdotes," p. 183.

companied with all these circumstances which really belong to it, but which Mrs. Thrale either did not know, or has suppressed. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"She says, in another place,[6] '*One gentleman, however, who dined at a nobleman's house in his company, and that of* Mr. Thrale, *to whom I was obliged for the anecdote, was willing to enter the lists in defence of* King William's *character; and having opposed and contradicted* Johnson *two or three times, petulantly enough, the master of the house began to feel uneasy, and expect disagreeable consequences; to avoid which he said, loud enough for the Doctor to hear,—'Our friend here has no meaning now in all this, except just to relate at club to-morrow how he teazed* Johnson *at dinner to-day; this is all to do himself* honour.—*No, upon my word, (replied the other,) I see no* honour *in it, whatever you may do.—Well, Sir, (returned* Mr. Johnson, *sternly,) if you do not* see *the honour, I am sure I* feel *the disgrace.*'

"This is all sophisticated. Mr. Thrale was *not* in the company, though he might have related the story to Mrs. Thrale. A friend, from whom I had the story, was present; and it was *not* at the house of a nobleman. On the observation being made by the master of the house on a gentleman's contradicting Johnson, that he had talked for the honour, &c. the gentleman muttered in a low voice, 'I see no honour in it;' and Dr. Johnson said nothing: so all the rest, (though *bien trouvée*) is mere garnish.

I have had occasion several times, in the course of this work, to point out the incorrectness of Mrs.

6 "Anecdotes," p. 242.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

1784. Thrale, as to particulars which consisted with my
Ætat. 75. own knowledge. But indeed she has, in flippant terms enough, expressed her disapprobation of that anxious desire of authenticity which prompts a person who is to record conversations, to write them down *at the moment*.[7] Unquestionably, if they are to be recorded at all, the sooner it is done the better. This lady herself says,[8] "*To recollect, however, and to repeat the sayings of* Dr. Johnson, *is almost all that can be done by the writers of his Life; as his life, at least since my acquaintance with him, consisted in little else than talking, when he was not employed in some serious piece of work.*" She boasts of her having kept a common-place book; and we find she noted, at one time or other, in a very lively manner, specimens of the conversation of Dr. Johnson, and of those who talked with him; but had she done it recently, they probably would have been less erroneous; and we should have been relieved from those disagreeable doubts of their authenticity, with which we must now peruse them.

She says of him.[9] "*He was the most charitable of mortals, without being what we call an* active friend. *Admirable at giving counsel; no man saw his way so clearly; but he* would not stir a finger *for the assistance of those to whom he was willing enough to give advice.*" And again on the same page, "*If you wanted* a slight favour, *you must apply to people of other dispositions; for* not a step would Johnson move *to obtain a man a vote in a society, to repay a compliment which might be useful or pleasing, to write a letter of request, &c. or to obtain a hundred*

[7] "Anecdotes," p. 44. [8] Ibid. p. 23. [9] Ibid. p. 51.

pounds a year more for a friend who perhaps had already two or three. No force could urge him to diligence, no importunity could conquer his resolution to stand still." 1784. Ætat. 75.

It is amazing that one who had such opportunities of knowing Dr. Johnson, should appear so little acquainted with his real character. I am sorry this lady does not advert, that she herself contradicts the assertion of his being obstinately defective in the *petites morales*, in the little endearing charities of social life, in conferring smaller favours; for she says,[1] "Dr. Johnson *was liberal enough in granting literary assistance to others, I think; and innumerable are the prefaces, Sermons, Lectures, and Dedications which he used to make for people who begged of him."* I am certain that a *more active friend* has rarely been found in any age. This work, which I fondly hope will rescue his memory from obloquy, contains a thousand instances of his benevolent exertions in almost every way that can be conceived; and particularly in employing his pen with a generous readiness for those to whom its aid could be useful. Indeed his obliging activity in doing little offices of kindness, both by letters and personal application, was one of the most remarkable features in his character; and for the truth of this I can appeal to a number of his respectable friends: Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Mr. Malone, the Bishop of Dromore, Sir William Scott, Sir Robert Chambers.—And can Mrs. Thrale forget the advertisements which he wrote for her husband at the time of his election contest;

[1] "Anecdotes," p. 193.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

1784. Ætat. 75. the epitaphs on him and her mother; the playful and even trifling verses, for the amusement of her and her daughters; his corresponding with her children, and entering into their minute concerns, which shews him in the most amiable light?

She relates,[2] that Mr. Ch—lm—ley unexpectedly rode up to Mr. Thrale's carriage, in which Mr. Thrale and she, and Dr. Johnson were travelling; that he paid them all his proper compliments, but observing that Dr. Johnson, who was reading, did not see him, "*tapt him gently on the shoulder. 'Tis* Mr. Ch—lm—ley;' *says my husband. 'Well, Sir—and what if it is* Mr. Ch—lm—ley; *says the other, sternly, just lifting his eyes a moment from his book, and returning to it again with renewed avidity.*" This surely conveys a notion of Johnson, as if he had been grossly rude to Mr. Cholmondley,[3] a gentleman whom he always loved and esteemed. If, therefore, there was an absolute necessity for mentioning the story at all, it might have been thought that her tenderness for Dr. Johnson's character would have disposed her to state any think that could soften it. Why then is there a total silence as to what Mr. Cholmondley told her?—that Johnson, who had known him from his earliest years, having been made sensible of what had doubtless a strange appearance, took occasion, when he afterwards met him, to make a very courteous and kind apology. There is another little circumstance which I cannot but remark.

[2] "Anecdotes," p. 258.

[3] George James Cholmondley, Esq. grandson of George, third Earl of Cholmondley, and one of the Commissioners of Excise; a gentleman respected for his abilities, and elegance of manners.

Her book was published in 1785, she had then in her possession a letter from Dr. Johnson, dated in 1777,[4] which begins thus; "Cholmondeley's story shocks me, if it be true, which I can hardly think, for I am utterly unconscious of it: I am very sorry, and very much ashamed." Why then publish the anecdote? Or if she did, why not add the circumstances, with which she was well acquainted! 1784. Ætat. 75.

In his social intercourse she thus describes him:[5] "*Ever musing till he was called out to converse, and conversing till the fatigue of his friends, or the promptitude of his own temper to take offence, consigned him back again to silent meditation.*" Yet, in the same book,[6] she tells us, "*He was, however, seldom inclined to be silent, when any moral or literary question was started; and it was on such occasions that, like the Sage in* 'Rasselas,' *he spoke, and attention watched his lips; he reasoned, and conviction closed his periods.*"—His conversation, indeed, was so far from ever *fatiguing* his friends, that they regretted when it was interrupted or ceased, and could exclaim in Milton's language,

"With thee conversing, I forgot all time."

I certainly, then, do not claim too much in behalf of my illustrious friend in saying, that however smart and entertaining Mrs. Thrale's "Anecdotes" are, they must not be held as good evidence against him; for wherever an instance of harshness and severity is told, I beg leave to doubt its perfect authenticity; for though there may have been *some* foundation for

[4] "Letters to Mrs. Thrale," Vol. II. p. 12.
[5] "Anecdotes," p. 23. [6] Ibid p. 302.

1784. Ætat. 75. it, yet, like that of his reproof to the "very celebrated lady," it may be so exhibited in the narration as to be very unlike the real fact.

The evident tendency of the following anecdote[7] is to represent Dr. Johnson as extremely deficient in affection, tenderness, or even common civility. "*When I one day lamented the loss of a first cousin killed in* America,—'*Prithee, my dear, (said he,) have done with canting; how would the world be the worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks, and roasted for* Presto's *supper?*'—Presto *was the dog that lay under the table while we talked.*"—I suspect this too of exaggeration and distortion. I allow that he made her an angry speech; but let the circumstances fairly appear, as told by Mr. Baretti, who was present:

"Mrs. Thrale, while supping very heartily upon larks, laid down her knife and fork, and abruptly exclaimed, 'O, my dear Johnson, do you know what has happened? The last letters from abroad have brought us an account that our poor cousin's head was taken off by a cannon-ball.' Johnson, who was shocked both at the fact, and her light unfeeling manner of mentioning it, replied, "Madam, it would give *you* very little concern if all your relations were spitted like those larks, and drest for Presto's supper."[8]

[7] "Anecdotes," p. 63.

[8] Upon mentioning this to my friend Mr. Wilkes, he, with his usual readiness, pleasantly matched it with the following *sentimental anecdote*. He was invited by a young man of fashion at Paris, to sup with him and a lady, who had been for some time his mistress, but with whom he was going to part. He said to Mr. Wilkes that he really felt very much for her, she was in such distress; and that he meant to make her a present of two hundred louis-d'ors. Mr.

It is with concern that I find myself obliged to animadvert on the inaccuracies of Mrs. Piozzi's "Anecdotes," and perhaps I may be thought to have dwelt too long upon her little collection. But as from Johnson's long residence under Mr. Thrale's roof, and his intimacy with her, the account which she has given of him may have made an unfavourable and unjust impression, my duty, as a faithful biographer, has obliged me reluctantly to perform this unpleasing task. 1784. Ætat. 75.

Having left the *pious negociation*, as I called it, in the best hands, I shall here insert what relates to it. Johnson wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds on July 6, as follows; "I am going, I hope, in a few days, to try the air of Derbyshire, but hope to see you before I go. Let me, however, mention to you what I have much at heart.—If the Chancellor should continue his attention to Mr. Boswell's request, and confer with you on the means of relieving my languid state, I am very desirous to avoid the appearance of asking money upon false pretences. I desire you to represent to his Lordship, what, as soon as it is suggested, he will perceive to be reasonable,—That, if I grow much worse, I shall be afraid to leave my physicians,

Wilkes observed the behaviour of Mademoiselle, who sighed indeed very piteously, and assumed every pathetick air of grief; but eat no less than three French pigeons, which are as large as English partridges, besides other things. Mr. Wilkes whispered the gentleman, "We often say in England, *Excessive sorrow is exceeding dry*, but I never heard *Excessive sorrow is exceeding hungry*. Perhaps *one* hundred will do." The gentleman took the hint.

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1784. Ætat. 75. to suffer the inconveniences of travel, and pine in the solitude of a foreign country;—That, if I grow much better, of which indeed there is now little appearance, I shall not wish to leave my friends and my domestick comforts; for I do not travel for pleasure or curiosity; yet if I should recover, curiosity would revive.—In my present state, I am desirous to make a struggle for a little longer life, and hope to obtain some help from a softer climate. Do for me what you can." He wrote to me July 26: "I wish your affairs could have permitted a longer and continued exertion of your zeal and kindness. They that have your kindness may want your ardour. In the mean time I am very feeble, and very dejected."

By a letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds I was informed, that the Lord Chancellor had called on him, and acquainted him that the application had not been successful; but that his Lordship, after speaking highly in praise of Johnson, as a man who was an honour to his country, desired Sir Joshua to let him know, that on granting a mortgage of his pension, he should draw on his Lordship to the amount of five or six hundred pounds; and that his Lordship explained the meaning of the mortage to be, that he wished the business to be conducted in such a manner, that Dr. Johnson should appear to be, under the least possible obligation. Sir Joshua mentioned, that he had by the same post communicated all this to Dr. Johnson.

How Johnson was affected upon the occasion will appear from what he wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds:

Ashbourne, Sept. 9. "Many words I hope are

not necessary between you and me, to convince you what gratitude is excited in my heart by the Chancellor's liberality, and your kind offices. * * * * * * 1784. Ætat. 75.

"I have enclosed a letter to the Chancellor, which, when you have read it, you will be pleased to seal with a head, or any other general seal, and convey it to him: had I sent it directly to him, I should have seemed to overlook the favour of your intervention."

"TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.[9]

"MY LORD,

"AFTER a long and not inattentive observation of mankind, the generosity of your Lordship's offer raises in me not less wonder than gratitude. Bounty, so liberally bestowed, I should gladly receive, if my condition made it necessary; for, to such a mind, who would not be proud to own his obligations? But it has pleased GOD to restore me to so great a measure of health, that if I should now appropriate so much of a fortune destined to do good, I could not escape from myself the charge of advancing a false claim. My journey to the continent, though I once thought it necessary, was never much encouraged by my physicians; and I was very desirous that your Lordship should be told of it by Sir Joshua Reynolds,

[9] Sir Joshua Reynolds, on account of the excellence both of the sentiment and expression of this letter, took a copy of it, which he shewed to some of his friends; one of whom, who admired it, being allowed to peruse it leisurely at home, a copy was made, and found its way into the newspapers and magazines. It was transcribed with some inaccuracies. I print it from the original draft in Johnson's own hand-writing.

1784. Ætat. 75. as an event very uncertain; for if I grew much better, I should not be willing, if much worse, not able, to migrate.—Your Lordship was first solicited without my knowledge; but, when I was told that you were pleased to honour me with your patronage, I did not expect to hear of a refusal; yet, as I have had no long time to brood hope, and have not rioted in imaginary opulence, this cold reception has been scarce a disappointment; and, from your Lordship's kindness, I have received a benefit, which only men like you are able to bestow. I shall now live *mihi carior*, with a higher opinion of my own merit.

"I am, my Lord,
"Your Lordship's most obliged,
"Most grateful, and
"Most humble servant,

"September, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Upon this unexpected failure I abstain from presuming to make any remarks, or to offer any conjectures.

Having, after repeated reasonings, brought Dr. Johnson to agree to my removing to London, and even to furnish me with arguments in favour of what he had opposed; I wrote to him requesting he would write them for me; he was so good as to comply, and I shall extract that part of his letter to me of June 11, as a proof how well he could exhibit a cautious yet encouraging view of it:

"I remember, and intreat you to remember, that *virtus est vitium fugere*; the first approach to riches is security from poverty. The condition upon which you have my consent to settle in London is, that your expence never exceeds your annual income.

Fixing this basis of security, you cannot be hurt, and you may be very much advanced. The loss of your Scottish business, which is all that you can lose, is not to be reckoned as any equivalent to the hopes and possibilities that open here upon you. If you succeed, the question of prudence is at an end; every body will think that done right which ends happily; and though your expectations, of which I would not advise you to talk too much, should not be totally answered, you can hardly fail to get friends who will do for you all that your present situation allows you to hope; and if, after a few years, you should return to Scotland, you will return with a mind supplied by various conversation, and many opportunities of enquiry, with much knowledge, and materials for reflection and instruction."

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Let us now contemplate Johnson thirty years after the death of his wife, still retaining for her all the tenderness of affection.

"TO THE REVEREND MR. BAGSHAW, AT BROMLEY.[1]

"SIR,

"PERHAPS you may remember, that in the year 1753, you committed to the ground my dear wife. I now entreat your permission to lay a stone upon her; and have sent the inscription, that, if you find it proper, you may signify your allowance.

"You will do me a great favour by showing the place where she lies, that the stone may protect her remains.

"Mr. Ryland will wait on you for the inscription,[2]

[1] See Vol. II. p. 266.

[2] Printed in his Works.

1784. and procure it to be engraved. You will easily be-
Ætat. 75. lieve that I shrink from this mournful office. When it is done, if I have strength remaining, I will visit Bromley once again, and pay you part of the respect to which you have a right from, Reverend Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"July 12, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

On the same day he wrote to Mr. Langton: "I cannot but think that in my languid and anxious state, I have some reason to complain that I receive from you neither enquiry nor consolation. You know how much I value your friendship, and with what confidence I expect your kindness, if I wanted any act of tenderness that you could perform; at least, if you do not know it, I think your ignorance is your own fault. Yet how long is it that I have lived almost in your neighbourhood without the least notice.—I do not, however, consider this neglect as particularly shown to me; I hear two of your most valuable friends make the same complaint. But why are all thus overlooked? You are not oppressed by sickness, you are not distracted by business; if you are sick, you are sick of leisure:—And allow yourself to be told, that no disease is more to be dreaded or avoided. Rather to do nothing than to do good, is the lowest state of a degraded mind. Boileau says to his pupil,

'*Que les vers ne soient pas vôtre eternel emploi,*
'*Cultivez vos amis.*'——

That voluntary debility, which modern language is content to term indolence, will, if it is not counter-

acted by resolution, render in time the strongest faculties lifeless, and turn the flame to the smoke of virtue.—I do not expect nor desire to see you, because I am much pleased to find that your mother stays so long with you, and I should think you neither elegant nor grateful, if you did not study her gratification. You will pay my respects to both the ladies, and to all the young people.—I am going Northward for a while, to try what help the country can give me; but, if you will write, the letter will come after me. 1784. Ætat. 75.

Next day he set out on a jaunt to Staffordshire and Derbyshire, flattering himself that he might be in some degree relieved.

During his absence from London he kept up a correspondence with several of his friends, from which I shall select what appears to me proper for publication, without attending nicely to chronological order.

To Dr. BROCKLESBY, he writes, Ashbourne, July 20. "The kind attention which you have so long shewn to my health and happiness, makes it as much a debt of gratitude as a call of interest, to give you an account of what befalls me, when accident recovers[3] me from your immediate care.—The journey of the first day was performed with very little sense of fatigue; the second day brought me to Lichfield, without much lassitude; but I am afraid that I could not have bore such violent agitation for many days together. Tell Dr. Heberden, that in the coach I read 'Ciceronianus' which I concluded as I entered Lich-

[3] [This is probably an errour either of the transcript or the press. *Removes* seems to be the word intended. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. field. My affection and understanding went along with Erasmus, except that once or twice he somewhat unskilfully entangles Cicero's civil or moral, with his rhetorical character.—I staid five days at Lichfield, but, being unable to walk, had no great pleasure, and yesterday (19th) I came hither, where I am to try what air and attention can perform.—Of any improvement in my health I cannot yet please myself with the perception. * * * * * *.—The asthma has no abatement. Opiates stop the fit, so as that I can sit and sometimes lie easy, but they do not now procure me the power of motion; and I am afraid that my general strength of body does not encrease. The weather indeed is not benign; but how low is he sunk whose strength depends upon the weather!—I am now looking into Floyer, who lived with his asthma to almost his ninetieth year. His book by want of order is obscure; and his asthma, I think, not of the same kind with mine. Something however I may perhaps learn—My appetite still continues keen enough; and what I consider as a symptom of radical health, I have a voracious delight in raw summer fruit, of which I was less eager a few years ago.—You will be pleased to communicate this account to Dr. Heberden, and if any thing is to be done, let me have your joint opinion.—Now—*abite curæ*;—let me enquire after the Club."[4]

July 31. "Not recollecting that Dr. Heberden might be at Windsor, I thought your letter long in coming. But, you know, *nocitura petuntur*, the letter which I so much desired, tells me that I have lost one of my best and tenderest friends.[5] My comfort

[4] At the Essex Head, Essex-street.

[5] Mr. Allen, the printer.

is, that he appeared to live like a man that had always before his eyes the fragility of our present existence, and was therefore, I hope, not unprepared to meet his judge.—Your attention, dear Sir, and that of Dr. Heberden, to my health, is extremely kind. I am loth to think that I grow worse; and cannot fairly prove even to my own partiality, that I grow much better. 1784. Ætat. 75.

August 5. "I return you thanks, dear Sir, for your unwearied attention, both medicinal and friendly, and hope to prove the effect of your care by living to acknowledge it.

August 12. "Pray be so kind as to have me in your thoughts, and mention my case to others as you have opportunity. I seem to myself neither to gain nor lose strength. I have lately tried milk, but have yet found no advantage, and am afraid of it merely as a liquid. My appetite is still good, which I know is dear Dr. Heberden's criterion of the *vis vitæ*.—As we cannot now see each other, do not omit to write, for you cannot think with what warmth of expectation I reckon the hours of a post-day."

August 14. "I have hitherto sent you only melancholy letters, you will be glad to hear some better account. Yesterday the asthma remitted, perceptibly remitted, and I moved with more ease than I have enjoyed for many weeks. May God continue his mercy.—This account I would not delay, because I am not a lover of complaints, or complainers, and yet I have since we parted, uttered nothing till now but terrour and sorrow. Write to me, dear Sir."

August 16. "Better I hope, and better. My respiration gets more and more ease and liberty. I went to church yesterday, after a very liberal dinner,

1784. without any inconvenience; it is indeed no long
Ætat. 75. walk, but I never walked it without difficulty, since I came, before. * * * * * * the intention was only to overpower the seeming *vis inertiæ* of the pectoral and pulmonary muscles.—I am favoured with a degree of ease that very much delights me, and do not despair of another race upon the stairs of the Academy.—If I were, however, of a humour to see, or to show the state of my body, on the dark side, I might say,

'*Quid te exempta juvat spinis de pluribus una?*'

The nights are still sleepless, and the water rises, though it does not rise very fast. Let us, however, rejoice in all the good that we have. The remission of one disease will enable nature to combat the rest.—The squills I have not neglected; for I have taken more than a hundred drops a day, and one day took two hundred and fifty, which, according to the popular equivalent of a drop to a grain, is more than half an ounce.—I thank you, dear Sir, for your attention in ordering the medicines; your attention to me has never failed. If the virtue of medicines could be enforced by the benevolence of the prescriber, how soon should I be well."

August 19. "The relaxation of the asthma still continues, yet I do not trust it wholly to itself, but soothe it now and then with an opiate. I not only perform the perpetual act of respiration with less labour, but I can walk with fewer intervals of rest, and with greater freedom of motion.—I never thought well of Dr. James's compounded medicines; his ingredients appear to me sometimes inefficacious and trifling, and sometimes heterogeneous and destructive

of each other. This prescription exhibits a composition of about three hundred and thirty grains, in which there are four grains of emetick tartar, and six drops [of] thebaick tincture. He that writes thus surely writes for show. The basis of his medicine is the gum ammoniacum, which dear Dr. Lawrence used to give, but of which I never saw any effect. We will, if you please, let this medicine alone. The squills have every suffrage, and in the squills we will rest for the present." 1784. Ætat. 75.

August 21. "The kindness which you show by having me in your thoughts upon all occasions, will, I hope, always fill my heart with gratitude. Be pleased to return my thanks to Sir George Baker, for the consideration which he has bestowed upon me.— Is this the Balloon that has been so long expected, this balloon to which I subscribed, but without payment? it is pity that philosophers have been disappointed, and shame that they have been cheated; but I know not well how to prevent either. Of this experiment I haveread nothing; where was it exhibited? and who was the man that ran away with so much money?—Continue, dear Sir, to write often and more at a time; for none of your prescriptions operate to their proper uses more certainly than your letters operate as cordials."

August 26. "I suffered you to escape last post without a letter, but you are not to expect such indulgence very often; for I write not so much because I have any thing to say, as because I hope for an answer; and the vacancy of my life here makes a letter of great value.—I have here little company and little amusement, and thus abandoned to the contemplation of my own miseries, I am something gloomy

1784. Ætat. 75. and depressed; this too I resist as I can, and find opium, I think, useful, but I seldom take more than one grain.—Is not this strange weather? Winter absorbed the spring, and now autumn is come before we have had summer. But let not our kindness for each other imitate the inconstancy of the seasons."

Sept. 2. "Mr. Windham has been here to see me; he came, I think, forty miles out of his way, and staid about a day and a half, perhaps I make the time shorter than it was. Such conversation I shall not have again till I come back to the regions of literaure; and there Windham is, *inter stellas*[6] *Luna minores*." He then mentions the effects of certain medicines, as taken; that "Nature is recovering its original powers, and the functions returning to their proper state. God continue his mercies, and grant me to use them rightly."

Sept. 9. "Do you know the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire? And have you ever seen Chatsworth? I was at Chatsworth on Monday: I had seen it before, but never when its owners was at home; I was very kindly received, and honestly pressed to stay: but I told them that a sick man is not a fit inmate of a great house. But I hope to go again some time."

Sept. 11. "I think nothing grows worse, but all rather better, except sleep, and that of late has been at its old pranks. Last evening, I felt what I had not known for a long time, an inclination to walk for amusement; I took a short walk, and came back again neither breathless nor fatigued.—This has been

[6] It is remarkable that so good a Latin scholar as Johnson, should have been so inattentive to the metre, as by mistake to have written *stellas* instead of *ignes*.

a gloomy, frigid, ungenial summer, but of late it seems to mend; I hear the heat sometimes mentioned, but I do not feel it; 1784. Ætat. 75.

'*Præterea minimus gelido jam in corpore sanguis*
'*Febre calet solâ.*'——

I hope, however, with good help, to find means of supporting a winter at home, and to hear and tell at the Club what is doing, and what ought to be doing in the world. I have no company here, and shall naturally come home hungry for conversation.—To wish you, dear Sir, more leisure, would not be kind; but what leisure you have, you must bestow upon me."

Sept. 16. "I have now let you alone for a long time, having indeed little to say. You charge me somewhat unjustly with luxury. At Chatsworth, you should remember, that I have eaten but once; and the Doctor, with whom I live, follows a milk diet. I grow no fatter, though my stomach, if it be not disturbed by physick, never fails me.—I now grow weary of solitude, and think of removing next week to Lichfield, a place of more society, but otherwise of less convenience. When I am settled, I shall write again.—Of the hot weather that you mentioned, we have [not] had in Derbyshire very much, and for myself I seldom feel heat, and suppose that my frigidity is the effect of my distemper; a supposition which naturally leads me to hope that a hotter climate may be useful. But I hope to stand another English winter.

Lichfield, Sept. 29. "On one day I had three letters about the air balloon: yours was far the best, and has enabled me to impart to my friends in the

1784. Ætat. 75. country an idea of this species of amusement. In amusement, mere amusement, I am afraid it must end, for I do not find that its course can be directed so as that it should serve any purposes of communication: and it can give no new intelligence of the state of the air at different heights, till they have ascended above the height of mountains, which they seem never likely to do.—I came hither on the 27th. How long I shall stay, I have not determined. My dropsy is gone, and my asthma much remitted, but I have felt myself a little declining these two days, or at least to day; but such vicissitudes must be expected. One day may be worse than another; but this last month is far better than the former; if the next should be as much better than this, I shall run about the town on my own legs."

October 6. "The fate of the balloon I do not much lament: to make new balloons, is to repeat the jest again. We now know a method of mounting into the air, and, I think, are not likely to know more. The vehicles can serve no use till we can guide them; and they can gratify no curiosity till we mount with them to greater heights than we can reach without; till we rise above the tops of the highest mountains, which we have yet not done. We know the state of the air in all its regions, to the top of Teneriffe, and therefore, learn nothing from those who navigate a balloon below the clouds. The first experiment, however, was bold, and deserved applause and reward. But since it has been performed, and its event is known, I had rather now find a medicine that can ease an asthma."

October 25. "You write to me with a zeal that animates, and a tenderness that melts me. I am not

afraid either of a journey to London, or a residence in it. I came down with little fatigue, and am now not weaker. In the smoky atmosphere I was delivered from the dropsy, which I consider as the original and radical disease. The town is my element;[7] there are my friends, there are my books, to which I have not yet bid farewell, and there are my amusements. Sir Joshua told me long ago, that my vocation was to publick life, and I hope still to keep my station, till GOD shall bid me *Go in peace*."

To Mr. HOOLE. Ashbourne, Aug. 7. "Since I was here, I have two little letters from you, and have not had the gratitude to write. But every man is most free with his best friends, because he does not suppose that they can suspect him of intentional incivility.—One reason for my omission is, that being in a place to which you are wholly a stranger, I have no topicks of correspondence. If you had any knowledge of Ashbourne, I could tell you of two Ashbourne men, who, being last week condemned at Derby to be hanged for a robbery, went and hanged themselves in their cell. But this, however it may supply us with talk, is nothing to you.—Your kindness, I know, would make you glad to hear some good

[7] His love of London continually appears. In a letter from him to Mrs. Smart, wife of his friend the Poet, which is published in a well-written life of him, prefixed to an edition of his Poems, in 1791, there is the following sentence: "To one that has passed so many years in the pleasures and opulence of London, there are few places that can give much delight."

Once, upon reading that line in the curious epitaph quoted in "The Spectator."

"Born in New-England, did in London die:"

he laughed and said, "I do not wonder at this. It would have been strange, if born in London, he had died in New-England."

1784. Ætat. 75. of me, but I have not much good to tell; if I grow not worse, it is all that I can say.—I hope Mrs. Hoole receives more help from her migration. Make her my compliments, and write again to, dear Sir, your affectionate servant."

Aug. 13. "I thank you for your affectionate letter. I hope we shall both be the better for each other's friendship, and I hope we shall not very quickly be parted.—Tell Mr. Nichols that I shall be glad of his correspondence, when his business allows him a little remission; though to wish him less business, that I may have more pleasure, would be too selfish.—To pay for seats at the balloon is not very necessary, because in less than a minute, they who gaze at a mile's distance will see all that can be seen. About the wings I am of your mind; they cannot at all assist it, nor I think regulate its motion.—I am now grown somewhat easier in my body, but my mind is some times depressed.—About the Club I am in no great pain. The forfeitures go on, and the house, I hear, is improved for our future meetings. I hope we shall meet often and sit long."

Sept. 4. "Your letter was, indeed, long in coming, but it was very welcome. Our acquaintance has now subsisted long, and our recollection of each other involves a great space, and many little occurrences, which melt the thoughts to tenderness.—Write to me, therefore, as frequently as you can.—I hear from Dr. Brocklesby and Mr. Ryland, that the Club is not crouded. I hope we shall enliven it when winter brings us together."

To Dr. Burney. August 2. "The weather, you know, has not been balmy; I am now reduced

to think, and am at last content to talk of the weather. Pride must have a fall.[8]—I have lost dear Mr. Allen; and wherever I turn, the dead or the dying meet my notice, and force my attention upon misery and mortality. Mrs. Burney's escape from so much danger, and her ease after so much pain, throws, however, some radiance of hope upon the gloomy prospect. May her recovery be perfect, and her continuance long.—I struggle hard for life. I take physick, and take air; my friend's chariot is always ready. We have run this morning twenty-four miles, and could run forty-eight more. *But who can run the race with death?*' 1784. Ætat. 75.

Sept. 4. [Concerning a private transaction, in which his opinion was asked, and after giving it, he makes the following reflections, which are applicable on other occasions.] "Nothing deserves more compassion than wrong conduct with good meaning; than loss or obloquy suffered by one, who, as, he is conscious only of good intentions, wonders why he loses that kindness which he wishes to preserve; and not knowing his own fault, if, as may sometimes happen, nobody will tell him, goes on to offend by his endeavours to please.—I am delighted by finding that our opinions are the same.—You

[8] There was no information for which Dr. Johnson was less grateful than for that which concerned the weather. It was in allusion to his impatience with those who were reduced to keep conversation alive by observations on the weather, that he applied the old proverb to himself. If any one of his intimate acquaintance told him it was hot or cold, wet or dry, windy or calm, he would stop them, by saying, "Poh! poh! you are telling us that of which none but men in a mine or a dungeon can be ignorant. Let us bear with patience, or enjoy in quiet, elementary changes, whether for the better or the worse, as they are never secrets." B.

1784. Ætat. 75. will do me a real kindness by continuing to write. A post-day has now been long a day of recreation."

Nov. 1. "Our correspondence paused for want of topicks. I had said what I had to say on the matter proposed to my consideration; and nothing remained but to tell you, that I waked or slept; that I was more or less sick. I drew my thoughts in upon myself, and supposed yours employed upon your book.—That your book has been delayed I am glad, since you have gained an opportunity of being more exact.—Of the caution necessary in adjusting narratives there is no end. Some tell what they do not know, that they may not seem ignorant, and others from mere indifference about truth. All truth is not, indeed, of equal importance; but, if little violations are allowed, every violation will in time be thought little; and a writer should keep himself vigilantly on his guard against the first temptations to negligence or supineness.—I had ceased to write, because respecting you I had no more to say, and respecting myself could say little good. I cannot boast of advancement, and in case of convalescence it may be said, with few exceptions, *non progredi, est regredi.* I hope I may be excepted.—My great difficulty was with my sweet Fanny,[9] who, by her artifice of inserting her letter in yours, had given me a precept of frugality which I was not at liberty to neglect; and I know not who were in town under whose cover I could send my letter. I rejoice to hear that you are so well, and have a delight particularly sympathetick in the recovery of Mrs. Burney."

[9] The celebrated Miss Fanny Burney.

To Mr. LANGTON. Aug. 25. "The kindness of your last letter, and my omission to answer it, begins to give you, even in my opinion, a right to recriminate, and to charge me with forgetfulness for the absent. I will, therefore, delay no longer to give an account of myself, and wish I could relate what would please either myself or my friend.—On July 13, I left London, partly in hope of help from new air and change of place, and partly excited by the sick man's impatience of the present. I got to Lichfield in a stage vehicle, with very little fatigue, in two days, and had the consolation[1] to find, that since my last visit my three old acquaintance are all dead.—July 20, I went to Ashbourne, where I have been till now; the house in which we live is repairing. I live in too much solitude, and am often deeply dejected: I wish we were nearer, and rejoice in your removal to London. A friend, at once cheerful and serious, is a great acquisition. Let us not neglect one another for the little time which Providence allows us to hope.—Of my health I cannot tell you, what my wishes persuaded me to expect, that it is much improved by the season or by remedies. I am sleepless; my legs grow weary with a very few steps, and the water breaks its boundaries in some degree. The asthma, however, has remitted; my breath is still much obstructed, but is more free than it was. Nights of watchfulness produce torpid days; I read very little, though I am alone; for I am tempted to

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[1] [Probably some word has been here omitted before *consolation*; perhaps *sad*, or *miserable*; or the word *consolation*, has been printed by mistake, instead of *mortification*:—but the original letter not being now [1798] in Mr. Langton's hands, the errour (if it be one) cannot be corrected. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. supply in the day what I lost in bed. This is my history; like all other histories, a narrative of misery. Yet am I so much better than in the beginning of the year, that I ought to be ashamed of complaining. I now sit and write with very little sensibility of pain or weakness; but when I rise, I shall find my legs betraying me. Of the money which you mentioned, I have no immediate need; keep it, however, for me, unless some exigence requires it. Your papers I will shew you certainly, when you would see them; but I am a little angry at you for not keeping minutes of your own *acceptum et expensum*, and think a little time might be spared from Aristophanes, for the *res familiares*. Forgive me, for I mean well. I hope, dear Sir, that you and Lady Rothes, and all the young people, too many to enumerate, are well and happy. God bless you all."

To Mr. Windham. August. "The tenderness with which you have been pleased to treat me, through my long illness, neither health nor sickness can, I hope, make me forget; and you are not to suppose, that after we parted you were no longer in my mind. But what can a sick man say, but that he is sick? His thoughts are necessarily concentered in himself: he neither receives nor can give delight; his enquiries are after alleviations of pain, and his efforts are to catch some momentary comfort.—Though I am now in the neighbourhood of the Peak, you must expect no account of its wonders, of its hills, its waters, its caverns, or its mines; but I will tell you, dear Sir, what I hope you will not hear with less satisfaction, that, for about a week past, my asthma has been less afflictive."

Lichfield, October 2. "I believe you had been long enough acquainted with the *phænomena* of sickness, not to be surprised that a sickman wishes to be where he is not, and where it appears to every body but himself that he might easily be, without having the resolution to remove. I thought Ashbourne a solitary place, but did not come hither till last Monday.—I have here more company, but my health has for this last week not advanced; and in the languor of disease how little can be done? Whither or when I shall make my next remove, I cannot tell; but I entreat you, dear Sir, to let me know from time to time, where you may be found, for your residence is a very powerful attractive to, Sir, your most humble servant." 1784. Ætat. 75.

"TO MR. PERKINS.

"DEAR SIR,

"I CANNOT but flatter myself that your kindness for me will make you glad to know where I am, and in what state.

"I have been struggling very hard with my diseases. My breath has been very much obstructed, and the water has attempted to encroach upon me again. I past the first part of the summer at Oxford, afterwards I went to Lichfield, thence to Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, and a week ago I returned to Lichfield.

My breath is now much easier, and the water is in a great measure run away, so that I hope to see you again before winter.

"Please make my compliments to Mrs. Perkins, and to Mr. and Mrs Barclay. I am dear Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"Lichfield, Oct. 4, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

1784. "TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON.

Ætat. 75. "DEAR SIR,

"CONSIDERING what reason you gave me in the spring to conclude that you took part in whatever good or evil might befal me, I ought not to have omitted so long the account which I am now about to give you.—My diseases are an asthma and a dropsy, and, what is less curable, seventy-five. Of the dropsy, in the beginning of the summer, or in the spring, I recovered to a degree which struck with wonder both me and my physicians: the asthma now is likewise, for a time, very much relieved. I went to Oxford, where the asthma was very tyrannical, and the dropsy began again to threaten me; but seasonable physick stopped the inundation: I then returned to London, and in July took a resolution to visit Staffordshire and Derbyshire, where I am yet struggling with my disease. The dropsy made another attack, and was not easily ejected, but at last gave way. The asthma suddenly remitted in bed, on the 13th of August, and, though now very oppressive, is, I think, still something gentler than it was before the remission. My limbs are miserably debilitated, and my nights are sleepless and tedious.—When you read this, dear Sir, you are not sorry that I wrote no sooner. I will not prolong my complaints. I hope still to see you *in a happier hour*, to talk over what we have often talked, and perhaps to find new topicks of merriment, or new incitements to curiosity.

"I am, dear sir, &c.

"Lichfield, Oct. 20, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO JOHN PARADISE, ESQ.[3]

"DEAR SIR,

"THOUGH in all my summer's excursion I have given you no account of myself, I hope you think better of me than to imagine it possible for me to forget you, whose kindness to me has been too great and too constant not to have made its impression on a harder breast than mine.—Silence is not very culpable, when nothing pleasing is suppressed. It would have alleviated none of your complaints to have read my vicissitudes of evil. I have struggled hard with very formidable and obstinate maladies; and though I cannot talk of health, think all praise due to my Creator and Preserver for the continuance of my life. The dropsy has made two attacks, and has given way to medicine; the asthma is very oppressive, but that has likewise once remitted. I am very weak, and very sleepless; but it is time to conclude the tale of misery.—I hope, dear Sir, that you grow better, for you have likewise your share of human evil, and that your lady and the young charmers are well.

"I am, dear Sir, &c.

"Lichfield, Oct. 27, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[3] Son of the late Peter Paradise, Esq. his Britannick Majesty's Consul at Salonica, in Macedonia, by his lady, a native of that country. He studied at Oxford, and has been honoured by that University with the degree of LL. D. He is distinguished not only by his learning and talents, but by an amiable disposition, gentleness of manners, and a very general acquaintance with well-informed and accomplished persons of almost all nations.

[Mr. Paradise died, December 12, 1795. M.]

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"TO MR. GEORGE NICOL.[3]

"DEAR SIR,

"SINCE we parted, I have been much oppressed by my asthma, but it has lately been less laborious. When I sit I am almost at ease, and I can walk, though yet very little, with less difficulty for this week past, than before. I hope I shall again enjoy my friends, and that you and I shall have a little more literary conversation.—Where I now am, every thing is very liberally provided for me but conversation. My friend is sick himself, and the reciprocation of complaints and groans afford not much of either pleasure or instruction. What we have not at home this town does not supply, and I shall be glad of a little imported intelligence, and hope that you will bestow, now and then, a little time on the relief and entertainment of, Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"Ashbourne, Aug. 19, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MR. CRUIKSHANK.

"DEAR SIR,

"Do not suppose that I forget you; I hope I shall never be accused of forgetting my benefactors. I had, till lately, nothing to write but complaints upon complaints, of miseries upon miseries; but within this fortnight I have received great relief.—Have your Lecturers any vacation? If you are released from the necessity of daily study, you may find time for a letter to me.—[In this letter he states the particulars of his case.]—In return for this account

[3] Bookseller to his Majesty.

of my health let me have a good account of yours, and of your prosperity in all your undertakings. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

"Ashbourne, Sept. 4, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

TO MR. THOMAS DAVIES. August 14.—"The tenderness with which you always treat me, makes me culpable in my own eyes for having omitted to write in so long a separation; I had, indeed, nothing to say that you could wish to hear. All has been hitherto misery accumulated upon misery, disease corroborating disease, till yesterday my asthma was perceptibly and unexpectedly mitigated. I am much comforted with this short relief, and am willing to flatter myself that it may continue and improve. I have at present, such a degree of ease, as not only may admit the comforts, but the duties of life. Make my compliments to Mrs. Davies.—Poor dear Allen, he was a good man."

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. Ashbourne, July 21, "The tenderness with which I am treated by my friends, make it reasonable to suppose that they are desirous to know the state of my health, and a desire so benevolent ought to be gratified.—I came to Lichfield in two days without any painful fatigue, and on Monday came hither, where I purpose to stay and try what air and regularity will effect. I cannot yet persuade myself that I have made much progress in recovery. My sleep is little, my breath is very much encumbered, and my legs are very weak. The water has increased a little, but has again run off. The most distressing symptom is want of sleep."

August 19. "Having had since our separation,

1784. Ætat. 75. little to say that could please you or myself by saying, I have not been lavish of useless letters; but I flatter myself that you will partake of the pleasure with which I can now tell you that about a week ago, I felt suddenly a sensible remission of my asthma, and consequently a greater lightness of action and motion.—Of this grateful alleviation I know not the cause, nor dare depend upon its continuance, but while it lasts I endeavour to enjoy it, and am desirous of communicating, while it lasts, my pleasure to my friends.—Hitherto, dear Sir, I had written before the post, which stays in this town but a little while, brought me your letter. Mr. Davies seems to have represented my little tendency to recovery in terms too splendid. I am still restless, still weak, still watery, but the asthma is less oppressive.—Poor Ramsay![8] On which side soever I turn, mortality presents its formidable frown. I left three old friends at Lichfield, when I was last there, and now found them all dead. I no sooner lost sight of dear Allan, than I am told that I shall see him no more. That we must all die, we always knew; I wish I had sooner remembered it. Do not think me intrusive or importunate, if I now call, dear Sir, on you to remember it."

Sept. 2. "I am glad that a little favour from the court has intercepted your furious purposes. I could not in any case have approved such publick violence of resentment, and should have considered any who encouraged it, as rather seeking sport for themselves, than honour for you. Resentment gratifies him who intended an injury, and pains him unjustly who did

[8] Allan Ramsay, Esq. painter to his Majesty, who died August 10, 1784, in the 71st year of his age, much regretted by his friends.

not intend it. But all this is now superfluous.—I still continue by God's mercy to mend. My breath is easier, my nights are quieter, and my legs are less in bulk, and stronger in use. I have, however, yet a great deal to overcome, before I can yet attain even an old man's health.—Write, do write to me now and then; we are now old acquaintance, and perhaps few people have lived so much and so long together, with less cause of complaint on either side. The retrospection of this is very pleasant, and I hope we shall never think on each other with less kindness."

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Sept. 9. "I could not answer your letter before this day, because I went on the sixth to Chatsworth, and did not come back till the post was gone.—Many words, I hope, are not necessary between you and me, to convince you what gratitude is excited in my heart, by the Chancellor's liberality and your kind offices. I did not indeed expect that what was asked by the Chancellor would have been refused, but since it has, we will not tell that any thing has been asked. —I have enclosed a letter to the Chancellor, which, when you have read it, you will be pleased to seal with a head, or other general seal, and convey it to him; had I sent it directly to him, I should have seemed to overlook the favour of your intervention. —My last letter told you of my advance in health, which, I think, in the whole still continues. Of the hydropick tumour there is now very little appearance; the asthma is much less troublesome, and seems to remit something day after day. I do not despair of supporting an English winter.—At Chatsworth, I met young Mr. Burke, who led me very commodiously into conversation with the Duke and Duchess.

1784. Ætat. 75. We had a very good morning. The dinner was publick."

Sept. 18. "I flattered myself that this week would have given me a letter from you, but none has come. Write to me now and then, but direct your next to Lichfield.—I think, and I hope am sure, that I still grow better; I have sometimes good nights; but am still in my legs weak, but so much mended, that I go to Lichfield in hope of being able to pay my visits on foot, for there are no coaches.—I have three letters this day, all about the balloon, I could have been content with one. Do not write about the balloon, whatever else you may think proper to say."

October 2. "I am always proud of your approbation, and therefore was much pleased that you liked my letter. When you copied it, you invaded the Chancellor's right rather than mine.—The refusal I did not expect, but I had never thought much about it, for I doubted whether the Chancellor had so much tenderness for me as to ask. He, being keeper of the King's conscience, ought not to be supposed capable of an improper petition.—All is not gold that glitters, as we have often been told; and the adage is verified in your place and my favour; but if what happens does not make us richer, we must bid it welcome, if it makes us wiser.—I do not at present grow better, nor much worse; my hopes, however, are somewhat abated, and a very great loss is the loss of hope, but I struggle on as I can.

To Mr. John Nichols. Lichfield, Oct. 20.

"When you were here, you were pleased, as I am

told, to think my absence an inconvenience. ' I should certainly have been very glad to give so skilful a lover of antiquities any information about my native place, of which, however, I know not much, and have reason to believe that not much is known.— Though I have not given you any amusement, I have received amusement from you. At Ashbourne, where I had very little company, I had the luck to borrow ' Mr. Bowyer's Life; a book so full of contemporary history, that a literary man must find some of his old friends. I thought that I could, now and then, have told you some hints worth your notice; and perhaps we may talk a life over. I hope we shall be much together; you must now be to me what you were before, and what dear Mr. Allen was, besides. He was taken unexpectedly away, but I think he was a very good man.—I have made little progress in recovery. I am very weak, and very sleepless: but I live on and hope."

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This various mass of correspondence, which I have thus brought together, is valuable, both as an addition to the store which the publick already has of Johnson's writings, and as exhibiting a genuine and noble specimen of vigour and vivacity of mind, which neither age nor sickness could impair or diminish.

It may be observed, that his writings in every way, whether for the publick, or privately to his friends, was by fits and starts; for we see frequently, that many letters are written on the same day. When he had once overcome his aversion to begin, he was, I suppose, desirous to go on, in order to relieve his mind from the uneasy reflection of delaying what he ought to do.

1784. Ætat. 75. While in the country, notwithstanding the accumulation of illness which he endured, his mind did not lose its powers. He translated an Ode of Horace, which is printed in his works, and composed several prayers. I shall insert one of them, which is so wise and energetick, so philosophical and so pious, that I doubt not of its affording consolation to many a sincere Christian, when in a state of mind to which I believe the best are sometimes liable.[5]

And here I am enabled fully to refute a very unjust reflection, by Sir John Hawkins, both against Dr. Johnson, and his faithful servant, Mr. Francis Barber; as if both of them had been guilty of culpable neglect towards a person of the name of Heely, whom Sir John chooses to call a *relation* of Dr. Johnson's. The fact is, that Mr. Heely was not his relation; he had indeed been married to one of his cousins, but she had died without having children, and he had married another woman; so that even the

[5] *Against inquisitive and perplexing thoughts*, "O Lord, my Maker and Protector, who hast graciously sent me into this world to work out my salvation, enable me to drive from me all such unquiet and perplexing thoughts as may mislead or hinder me in the practice of those duties which Thou hast required. When I behold the works of thy hands, and consider the course of thy providence, give me grace always to remember that thy thoughts are not my thoughts, nor thy ways my ways. And while it shall please thee to continue me in this world, where much is to be done, and little to be known, teach me by thy Holy Spirit, to withdraw my mind from unprofitable and dangerous enquiries, from difficulties vainly curious, and doubts impossible to be solved. Let me rejoice in the light which Thou hast imparted, let me serve Thee with active zeal and humble confidence, and wait with patient expectation for the time in which the soul which Thou receivest shall be satisfied with knowledge. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

slight connection which there once had been by *alliance* was dissolved. Dr. Johnson, who had shewn very great liberality to this man while his first wife was alive, as has appeared in a former part of this work,[6] was humane and charitable enough to continue his bounty to him occasionally; but surely there was no strong call of duty upon him or upon his legatee, to do more. The following letter, obligingly communicated to me by Mr. Andrew Strahan, will confirm what I have stated:

"TO MR. HEELY, NO. 5, IN PYE-STREET, WESTMINSTER.

"SIR,

"As necessity obliges you to call so soon again upon me, you should at least have told the smallest sum that will supply your present want; you cannot suppose that I have much to spare. Two guineas is as much as you ought to be behind with your creditor.—If you wait on Mr. Strahan, in New-street, Fetter-lane, or in his absence, on Mr. Andrew Strahan, show this, by which they are entreated to advance you two guineas, and to keep this as a voucher.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"Ashbourne, Aug. 12, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Indeed it is very necessary to keep in mind that Sir John Hawkins has unaccountably viewed John-

[6] Vol. II. p. 33.

1784. Ætat. 75. son's character and conduct in almost every particular, with an unhappy prejudice.[7]

We now behold Johnson for the last time, in his native city, for which he ever retained a warm affection, and which, by a sudden apostrophe, under the word *Lich*, he introduces with reverence, into his immortal Work, THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY:—'*Salve,*

[7] I shall add one instance only to those which I have thought it incumbent on me to point out. Talking of Mr. Garrick's having signified his willingness to let Johnson have the loan of any of his books to assist him in his edition of Shakspeare; Sir John says, (page 444,) "Mr. Garrick knew not what risque he ran by this offer. Johnson had so strange a forgetfulness of obligations of this sort, that few who lent him books ever saw them again." This surely conveys a most unfavourable insinuation, and has been so understood. Sir John mentions the single case of a curious edition of Politian, which he tells us, appeared to belong to Pembroke College, which, probably, had been considered by Johnson as his own, for upwards of fifty years." Would it not be fairer to consider this as an inadvertence, and draw no general inference? The truth is, that Johnson waa so attentive, that in one of his manuscripts in my possession, he has marked in two columns, books borrowed, and books lent.

In Sir John Hawkins's compilation, there are, however, some passages concerning Johnson which have unquestionable merit. One of them I shall transcribe, in justice to a writer whom I have had too much occasion to censure, and to shew my fairness as the biographer of my illustrious friend: "There was wanting in his conduct and behaviour, that dignity which results from a regular and orderly course of action, and by an irresistible power commands esteem. He could not be said to be a stayed man, nor so to have adjusted in his mind the balance of reason and passion, as to give occasion to say what may be observed of some men, that all they do is just, fit, and right." Yet a judicious friend well suggests, "It might, however, have been added, that such men are often merely just, and rigidly correct, while their hearts are cold and unfeeling; and that Johnson's virtues were of a much higher tone than those of the *stayed, orderly man*, here described."

magna parens!"[8] While here, he felt a revival of all the tenderness of filial affection, an instance of which appeared in his ordering the grave-stone and inscription over Elizabeth Blaney[9] to be substantially and carefully renewed. 1784. Ætat. 75.

To Mr. Henry White, a young clergyman, with whom he now formed an intimacy, so as to talk to him with great freedom, he mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. "Once, indeed, (said he,) I was disobedient; I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter-market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault, I went to Uttoxeter in very bad weather, and stood for a considerable time bareheaded in the rain, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory."

[8] The following circumstance, mutually to the honour of Johnson and the corporation of his native city, has been communicated to me by the reverend Dr. Vyse, from the Town-Clerk: "Mr. Simpson has now before him, a record of the respect and veneration which the Corporation of Lichfield, in the year 1767, had for the merits and learning of Dr. Johnson. His father built the corner house in the Market-place, the two fronts of which, towards Market and Broad-market-street, stood upon waste land of the Corporation, under a forty years' lease, which was then expired. On the 15th of August, 1767, at a common-hall of the bailiffs and citizens, it was ordered (and that without any solicitation,) that a lease should be granted to Samuel Johnson, Doctor of Laws, of the encroachments at his house, for the term of ninety-nine years, at the old rent, which was five shillings. Of which, as Town-Clerk, Mr. Simpson had the honour and pleasure of informing him, and that he was desired to accept it, without paying any fine on the occasion, which lease was afterwards granted, and the Doctor died possessed of this property."

[9] See Vol. I. p. 14.

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"I told him (says Miss Seward) in one of my latest visits to him, of a wonderful learned pig, which I had seen at Nottingham; and which did all that we have observed exhibited by dogs and horses. The subject amused him. 'Then, (said he,) the pigs are a race unjustly calumniated. *Pig* has, it seems, not been wanting to *man*, but *man* to *pig*. We do not allow *time* for his education, we kill him at a year old.' Mr. Henry White, who was present, observed that if this instance had happened in or before Pope's time, he would not have been justified in instancing the swine as the lowest degree of groveling instinct. Dr. Johnson seemed pleased with the observation, while the person who made it proceeded to remark, that great torture must have been employed, ere the indocility of the animal could have been subdued.—'Certainly, (said the Doctor;) but, (turning to me,) how old is your pig?' I told him, three years old. 'Then, (said he,) the pig has no cause to complain; he would have been killed the first year if he had not been *educated*, and protracted existence is a good recompence for very considerable degrees of torture."

As Johnson had now very faint hopes of recovery, and as Mrs. Thrale was no longer devoted to him, it might have been supposed that he would naturally have chosen to remain in the comfortable house of his beloved wife's daughter, and end his life where he began it. But there was in him an animated and lofty spirit,[9] and however complicated diseases might

[9] Mr. Burke suggested to me as applicable to Johnson, what Cicero, in his CATO MAJOR, says of *Appius*: "*Intentum enim animum tanquam arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti;*" repeating, at the same time, the following noble words in the same passage: "*Ita enim senectus honesta est si se ipsa defen-*

depress ordinary mortals, all who saw him beheld and acknowledged the *invictum animum Catonis*.[1] Such was his intellectual ardour even at this time, that he said to one friend, "Sir, I look upon every day to be lost, in which I do not make a new acquaintance; and to another, when talking of his illness, "I will be conquered; I will not capitulate." And such was his love of London, so high a relish had he of its magnificent extent, and variety of intellectual entertainment, that he languished when absent from it, his mind having become quite luxurious from the long habit of enjoying the metropolis; and, therefore, although at Lichfield, surrounded with friends who loved and revered him, and for whom he had a very sincere affection, he still found, that such conversation as London affords, could be found no where else. These feelings, joined, probably, to some flattering hopes of aid from the eminent physicians and surgeons in London, who kindly and generously attended him without accepting fees, made him resolve to return to the capital.

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From Lichfield he came to Birmingham, where he passed a few days with his worthy old schoolfellow, Mr. Hector, who thus writes to me: "He was very solicitous with me to recollect some of our most early transactions, and transmit them to him, for I perceived nothing gave him greater pleasure than calling to mind those days of our innocence. I com-

dit, si jus suum retinet, si nemini emancipata est, si usque ad extremum vitæ spiritum vindicem jus suum."

[1] [*Atrocem* animum Catonis, are Horace's words, and it may be doubted whether *atrox* is used by any other original writer in the same sense. *Stubborn* is perhaps the most correct translation of this epithet. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. plied with his request, and he only received them a few days before his death. I have transcribed for your inspection, exactly the minutes I wrote to him." This paper having been found in his repositories after his death, Sir John Hawkins has inserted it entire, and I have made occasional use of it and other communications from Mr. Hector,[2] in the course of this Work. I have both visited and corresponded with him since Dr. Johnson's death, and by my enquiries concerning a great variety of particulars have obtained additional information. I followed the same mode with the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in whose presence I wrote down a good deal of what he could tell; and he, at my request, signed his name, to give it authenticity. It is very rare to find any person who is able to give a distinct account of the life even of one whom he has known intimately, without questions being put to them. My friend Dr. Kippis, has told me, that on this account it is a practice with him to draw out a biographical catechism.

Johnson then proceeded to Oxford, where he was again kindly received by Dr. Adams,[3] who was

[2] It is a most agreeable circumstance attending the publication of this Work, that Mr. Hector has survived his illustrious schoolfellow so many years; that he still retains his health and spirits; and has gratified me with the following acknowledgement: "I thank you, most sincerely thank you, for the great and long continued entertainment your Life of Dr. Johnson has afforded me, and others, of my particular friends." Mr. Hector, besides setting me right as to the verse on a sprig of Myrtle, (see Vol. I. p. 66, note,) has favoured me with two English odes, written by Dr. Johnson, at an early period of his life, which will appear in my edition of his Poems.

[This early and worthy friend of Johnson died at Birmingham, September 2, 1794. M.]

[3] [This amiable and excellent man survived Dr. Johnson about

pleased to give me the following account in one of his letters, (Feb. 17th, 1785:) "His last visit was, I believe, to my house, which he left, after a stay of four or five days. We had much serious talk together, for which I ought to be the better as long as I live. You will remember some discourse which we had in the summer upon the subject of prayer, and the difficulty of this sort of composition. He reminded me of this, and of my having wished him to 1784. Ætat. 75.

four years, having died in January 1789, at Gloucester, where a Monument is erected to his Memory, with the following Inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of
WILLAM ADAMS, D.D.
Master of Pembroke College, Oxford
Prebendary of this Cathedral, and
Archdeacon of Landaff.

Ingenious, Learned, Eloquent,
He ably defended the Truth of Christianity:
Pious, Benevolent, and Charitable,
He successfully inculcated its sacred Precepts.
Pure, and undeviating in his own Conduct,
He was tender and compassionate to the Failings of others.
Ever anxious for the welfare and happiness of Mankind,
He was on all occasions forward to encourage
Works of publick Utility, and extensive Beneficence.
In the Government of the College over which he presided,
His vigilant Attention was uniformly exerted
To promote the important Objects of the institution;
Whilst the mild Dignity of his Deportment,
His gentleness of Disposition, and urbanity of Manners,
Inspired Esteem, Gratitude, and Affection,

Full of Days, and matured in Virtue,
He died Jan. 13th, 1789, aged 82.

A very just character of Dr. Adams may also be found in "The Gentleman's Magazine," for 1789, Vol. LIX. p. 214. His only daughter (see p. 315,) was married, in July 1788, to B. Hyatt of Painswick in Gloucestershire, Esq. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. try his hand, and to give us a specimen of the style and manner that he approved. He added, that he was now in a right frame of mind, and as he could not possibly employ his time better, he would in earnest set about it. But I find upon enquiry, that no papers of this sort were left behind him, except a few short ejaculatory forms suitable to his present situation."

Dr. Adams had not then received accurate information on this subject; for it has since appeared that various prayers had been composed by him at different periods, which intermingled with pious resolutions, and some short notes of his life, were entitled by him "Prayers and Meditations," and have, in pursuance of his earnest requisition, in the hopes of doing good, been published, with a judicious well-written Preface, by the reverend Mr. Strahan, to whom he delivered them. This admirable collection, to which I have frequently referred in the course of this Work, evinces, beyond all his compositions for the publick, and all the eulogies of his friends and admirers, the sincere virtue and piety of Johnson. It proves with unquestionable authenticity, that amidst all his constitutional infirmities, his earnestness to conform his practice to the precepts of Christianity was unceasing, and that he habitually endeavoured to refer every transaction of his life to the will of the Supreme Being.

He arrived in London on the 16th of November, and next day sent to Dr. Burney the following note, which I insert as the last token of his remembrance of that ingenious and amiable man, and as another of the many proofs of the tenderness and benignity of his heart:

"Mr. Johnson, who came home last night, 1784.
sends his respects to dear Dr. Burney, and all the Ætat. 75.
dear Burneys, little and great."

"TO MR. HECTOR, IN BIRMINHGAM.

DEAR SIR,

"I did not reach Oxford until Friday morning, and then I sent Francis to see the balloon fly, but could not go myself. I staid at Oxford till Tuesday, and then came in the common vehicle easily to London. I am as I was, and having seen Dr. Brocklesby, am to ply the squills; but, whatever be their efficacy, this world must soon pass away. Let us think seriously on our duty.—I send my kindest respects to dear Mrs. Careless: let me have the prayers of both. We have all lived long, and must soon part. God have mercy on us, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

"I am, &c.

"London, Nov. 17, 1784. "Sam. Johnson."

His correspondence with me, after his letter on the subject of my settling in London, shall now, so far as is proper, be produced in one series.

July 26, he wrote to me from Ashbourne: "On the 14th I came to Lichfield, and found every body glad enough to see me. On the 20th, I came hither, and found a house half-built, of very uncomfortable appearence; but my own room has not been altered. That a man worn with diseases, in his seventy-second or third year, should condemn part of his remaining life to pass among ruins and rubbish, and that no inconsiderable part, appears to me very strange.—I know that your kindness makes you impatient to

1784. Ætat. 75. know the state of my health, in which I cannot boast of much improvement. I came through the journey without much inconvenience, but when I attempt self-motion I find my legs weak, and my breath very short; this day I have been much disordered. I have no company; the Doctor[4] is busy in his fields, and goes to bed at nine, and his whole system is so different from mine, that we seem formed for different elements; I have, therefore, all my amusement to seek within myself."

Having written to him in bad spirits, a letter filled with dejection and fretfulness, and at the same time expressing anxious apprehensions concerning him, on account of a dream which had disturbed me; his answer was chiefly in terms of reproach, for a supposed charge of "affecting discontent, and indulging the vanity of complaint." It, however, proceeded, "Write to me often, and write like a man. I consider your fidelity and tenderness as a great part of the comforts which are yet left me, and sincerely wish we could be nearer to each other.— * * * * * * * *.—My dear friend, *life is very* short and very uncertain; let us spend it as well as we can. My worthy neighbour, Allen, is dead. Love me as well as you can. Pay my respects to dear Mrs. Boswell.—Nothing ailed me at that time; let your superstition at last have an end."

Feeling very soon, that the manner in which he had written might hurt me, he two days afterwards, July 28, wrote to me again, giving me an account of his sufferings; after which, he thus proceeds: "Before this letter, you will have had one which I

[4] The Rev. Dr. Taylor.

hope you will not take amiss; for it contains only truth, and that truth kindly intended. * * * * * * *. *Spartam quam nactus es orna*; make the most and best of your lot, and compare yourself not with the few that are above you, but with the multitudes which are below you. * * * * * *. Go steadily forwards with lawful business or honest diversions. '*Be*, (as Temple says of the Dutchmen,) *well when you are not ill, and pleased when you are not angry.*'— * * * * * *. This may seem but an ill return for your tenderness; but I mean it well, for I love you with great ardour and sincerity. Pay my respects to dear Mrs. Boswell, and teach the young ones to love me."

1784. Ætat. 75.

I unfortunately was so much indisposed during a considerable part of the year, that it was not, or at least I thought it was not, in my power to write to my illustrious friend as formerly, or without expressing such complaints as offended him. Having conjured him not to do me the injustice of charging me with affectation, I was with much regret long silent. His last letter to me then came, and affected me very tenderly:

"TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE this summer sometimes amended, and sometimes relapsed, but, upon the whole, have lost ground very much. My legs are extremely weak, and my breath very short, and the water is now encreasing upon me. In this uncomfortable state your letters used to relieve; what is the reason that I have them no longer? Are you sick, or are you sullen? Whatever be the reason, if it be less than

1784. Ætat. 75. necessity, drive it away; and of the short life that we have, make the best use for yourself and for your friends. * * * * * *. I am sometimes afraid that your omission to write has some real cause, and shall be glad to know that you are not sick, and that nothing ill has befallen dear Mrs. Boswell, or any of your family.

"I am, Sir, your, &c.

"Lichfield, Nov. 5, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

Yet it was not a little painful to me to find, that in a paragraph of this letter, which I have omitted, he still persevered in arraigning me as before, which was strange in him who had so much experience of what I suffered. I, however, wrote to him two as kind letters as I could; the last of which came too late to be read by him, for his illness encreased more rapidly upon him than I had apprehended; but I had the consolation of being informed that he spoke of me on his death-bed, with affection, and I look forward with humble hope of renewing our friendship in a better world.

I now relieve the readers of this Work from any farther personal notice of its authour; who, if he should be thought to have obtruded himself too much upon ther attention, request them to consider the peculiar plan of his biographical undertaking.

Soon after Johnson's return to the metropolis, both the asthma and dropsy became more violent and distressful. He had for some time kept a journal in Latin of the state of his illness, and the remedies which he used, under the title of *Ægri Ephemeris*, which he began on the 6th of July, but con-

tinued it no longer than the 8th of November; finding, I suppose, that it was a mournful and unavailing register. It is in my possession; and is written with great care and accuracy. 1784. Ætat. 75.

Still his love of literature[5] did not fail. A very

[5] It is truly wonderful to consider the extent and constancy of Johnson's literary ardour, notwithstanding the melancholy which clouded and embittered his existence. Besides the numerous and various works which he executed, he had, at different times, formed schemes of a great many more, of which the following catalogue was given by him to Mr. Langton, and by that gentleman presented to his Majesty:

"Divinity.

"A small book of precepts and directions for piety: the hint taken from the directions in Morton's exercise.

"Philosophy, History, and Literature in general.

"History of Criticism, as it relates to judging of authours, from Aristotle to the present age. An account of the rise and improvements of that art; of the different opinions of authours, ancient and modern.

"Translation of the History of Herodian.

"New edition of Fairfax's Translation of Tasso, with notes, glossary, &c.

"Chaucer, a new edition of him, from manuscripts and old editions, with various readings, conjectures, remarks on his language, and the changes it had undergone from the earliest times to his age, and from his to the present; with notes explanatory of customs, &c. and references to Boccace, and other authours from whom he has borrowed, with an account of the liberties he has taken in telling the stories; his life, and an exact etymological glossary.

"Aristotle's Rhetorick, a translation of it into English.

"A collection of Letters, translated from the modern writers, with some account of the several authours.

"Oldham's Poems, with notes, historical and critical.

"Roscommon's Poems, with notes.

"Lives of the Philosophers, written with a polite air, in such a manner as may divert as well as instruct.

"History of the Heathen Mythology, with an explication of

1784. few days before his death he transmitted to his friend
Ætat. 75. Mr. John Nichols, a list of the authours of the Uni-

the fables, both allegorical and historical; with references to the poets.

"History of the State of Venice, in a compendious manner.

"Aristotle's Ethicks, an English translation of them, with notes.

"Geographical Dictionary, from the French.

"Hierocles upon Pythagoras, translated into English, perhaps with notes. This is done by Norris.

"A book of Letters, upon all kind of subjects.

"Claudian, a new edition of his works, *cum notis variorum*, in the manner of Burman.

"Tully's Tusculan questions, a translation of them.

"Tully's De Naturâ Deorum, a translation of those books.]

"Benzo's New History of the New World, to be translated.

"Machiavel's History of Florence, to be translated.

"History of the Revival of Learning in Europe, containing an account of whatever contributed to the restoration of literature; such as controversies, printing, the destruction of the Greek empire, the encouragement of great men, with the lives of the most eminent patrons, and most eminent early professors of all kinds of learning in different countries.

"A Body of Chronology, in verse, with historical notes.

"A Table of the Spectators, Tatlers, and Guardians, distinguished by figures into six degrees of value, with notes, giving the reasons of preference or degradation.

"A Collection of Letters from English authours, with a preface giving some account of the writers; with reasons for selection, and criticism upon styles; remarks on each letter, if needful.

"A Collection of Proverbs from various languages. Jan. 6,—53.

"A Dictionary to the Common Prayer, in imitation of Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible. March,—52.

"A Collection of Stories and Examples, like those of Valerius Maximus. Jan. 10,—53.

"From Ælian, a volume of select Stories, perhaps from others. Jan. 28,—53.

"Collection of Travels, Voyages, adventures, and Descriptions of Countries.

"Dictionary of Ancient History and Mythology.

versal History, mentioning their several shares in that work. It has, according to his direction, been 1784. Ætat. 75.

"Treatise on the Study of Polite Literature, containing the history of learning, directions for editions, commentaries, &c.

"Maxims, Characters, and Sentiments, after the manner of Bruyere, collected out of ancient authors, particularly the Greek with Apophthegms.

"Classical Miscellanies, Select Translations from ancient Greek and Latin authours.

"Lives of Illustrious Persons, as well of the active as the learned, in imitation of Plutarch.

"Judgement of the learned upon English authours.

"Poetical Dictionary of the English tongue.

"Considerations upon the present state of London.

"Collection of Epigrams, with notes and observations.

"Observations on the English language, relating to words, phrases, and modes of Speech.

"Minutiæ Literariæ, Miscellaneous reflections, criticisms, emendations, notes.

"History of the Constitution.

"Comparison of Philosophical and Christian Morality, by sentences collected from the moralists and fathers.

"Plutarch's Lives, in English, with notes.

POETRY and works of IMAGINATION.

"Hymn to Ignorance.

"The Palace of Sloth,—a vision.

"Coluthus, to be translated.

"Prejudice,—a poetical essay.

"The Palace of Nonsense,—a vision."

Johnson's extraordinary facility of composition, when he shook off his constitutional indolence, and resolutely sat down to write, is admirably described by Mr. Courtenay, in his "Poetical Review," which I have several times quoted:

"While through life's maze he sent a piercing view,
"His mind expansive to the object grew.
"With various stores of erudition fraught,
"The lively image, the deep-searching thought.

1784. Ætat. 75. deposited in the British Museum, and is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for December, 1784.[6]

"Slept in repose;—but when the moment press'd,
"The bright ideas stood at once confess'd;
"Instant his genius sped its vigorous rays,
"And o'er the letter'd world diffus'd a blaze:
"As womb'd with fire the cloud electrick flies,
"And calmly o'er th' horizon seems to rise:
"Touch'd by the pointed steel, the lightning flows,
"And all th' expanse with rich effulgence glows."

We shall in vain endeavour to know with exact precision every production of Johnson's pen. He owned to me, that he had written about forty sermons; but as I understood that he had given or sold them to different persons, who were to preach them as their own, he did not consider himself at liberty to acknowledge them. Would those who were thus aided by him, who are still alive, and the friends of those who are dead, fairly inform the world, it would be obligingly gratifying a reasonable curiosity, to which there should, I think, now be no objection. Two volumes of them, published since his death, are sufficiently ascertained; see Vol. II. p. 250.—I have before me, in his hand-writing, a fragment of twenty quarto leaves, of a translation into English of Sallust, *De Bello Catilinario*. When it was done I have no notion; but it seems to have no very superiour merit to mark it as his. Besides the publications heretofore mentioned, I am satisfied, from internal evidence, to admit also as genuine the following, which, notwithstanding all my chronological care, escaped me in the course of this work:

"Considerations on the Case of Dr. Trapp's Sermons,"† published in 1739, in the Gentleman's Magazine. It is a very ingenious defence of the right of *abridging* an authour's work, without being held as infringing his property. This is one of the nicest questions in the *Law of Literature*; and I cannot help thinking, that the indulgence of abridging is often exceedingly injurious to authours and booksellers, and should in very few cases be permitted. At any rate, to prevent difficult and uncertain discussion, and give an absolute security to authours in the property of their labours, no abridgement whatever should be permitted, till after the expiration of such a number of years as the Legislature may be pleased to fix.

During his sleepless nights he amused himself by translating into Latin verse, from the Greek, many 1784. Ætat. 75.

But, though it has been confidently ascribed to him, I cannot allow that he wrote a Dedication to both Houses of Parliament of a book entitled "The Evangelical History Harmonized." He was no *croaker*; no declaimer against *the times*. He would not have written, "That we are fallen upon an age in which corruption is not barely universal, is universally confessed." Nor, "Rapine preys on the publick without opposition, and perjury betrays it without inquiry." Nor would he, to excite a speedy reformation, have conjured up such phantoms of terrour as these: "A few years longer, and perhaps all endeavours will be in vain. We may be swallowed by an earthquake: we may be delivered to our enemies." This is not Johnsonian.

There are, indeed, in this Dedication several sentences constructed upon the model of those of Johnson. But the imitation of the form, without the spirit of his style, has been so general, that this of itself is not sufficient evidence. Even our newspaper writers aspire to it. In an account of the funeral of Edwin, the comedian, in "The Diary" of Nov. 9, 1790, that son of drollery is thus described: "A man who had so often cheered the sullenness of vacancy, and suspended the approaches of sorrow." And in "The Dublin Evening Post," August 16, 1791, there is the following paragraph: "It is a singular circumstance, that in a city like this, containing 200,000 people, there are three months in the year during which no place of publick amusement is open. Long vacation is here a vacation from pleasure, as well as business; nor is there any mode of passing the listless evenings of declining summer, but in the riots of a tavern, or the stupidity of a coffee-house."

I have not thought it necessary to specify every copy of verses written by Johnson, it being my intention to publish an authentick edition of all his Poetry, with notes.

[6] [As the letter accompanying this list, (which fully supports the observation in the text,) was written but a week before Dr. Johnson's death, the reader may not be displeased to find it here preserved:

"TO MR. NICHOLS.

"THE late learned Mr. Swinton, having one day remarked that one man, meaning, I suppose, no man but himself, could assign

1784. Ætat. 75. of the epigrams in the *Anthologia*. These translations, with some other poems by him in Latin, he gave to his friend Mr. Langton, who, having added

all the parts of the Ancient Universal History to their proper authours, at the request of Sir Robert Chambers, or of myself, gave the account which I now transmit to you in his own hand; being willing that of so great a work the history should be known, and that each writer should receive his due proportion of praise from posterity.

"I recommend to you to preserve this scrap of literary intelligence in Mr. Swinton's own hand, or to desposite it in the Museum, that the veracity of this account may never be doubted.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

' Dec. 6, 1784.

Mr. S —— n.

The History of the Carthaginians.
———— ———— Numidians.
———— ———— Mauritanians.
———— ———— Gætulians.
———— ———— Garamanthes.
———— ———— Melano Gætulians
———— ———— Nigritæ.
———— ———— Cyrenaica.
———— ———— Marmarica.
———— ———— the Regio Syrtica.
———— ———— Turks, Tartars, and Moguls.
———— ———— Indians.
The History of the Chinese.
Dissertation on the peopling of America.
———— on the independency of the Arabs.—

The Cosmogony, and a small part of the History immediately following; by Mr. Sale.

To the birth of Abraham; chiefly by Mr. Shelvock.

History of the Jews, Gauls, and Spaniards; by Mr. Psalmanaazar.

Xenophon's Retreat; by the same.

History of the Persians and the Constantinopolitan Empire; by Dr. Campbell.

History f the R omans; by Mr. Bower.]

a few notes, sold them to the booksellers for a small sum to be given to some of Johnson's relations, which was accordingly done; and they are printed in the collection of his works. 1784. Ætat. 75.

A very erroneous notion has circulated as to Johnson's deficiency in the knowledge of the Greek language, partly owing to the modesty with which, from knowing how much there was to be learnt, he used to mention his own comparative acquisitions. When Mr. Cumberland[7] talked to him of the Greek fragments which are so well illustrated in "The Observer," and of the Greek dramatists in general, he candidly acknowledged his insufficiency in that particular branch of Greek literature. Yet it may be said, that though not a great, he was a good Greek scholar. Dr. Charles Burney, the younger, who is universally acknowledged, by the best judges, to be one of the few men of this age who are very eminent for their skill in that noble language, has assured me, that Johnson could give a Greek word for almost every English one; and that although not sufficiently conversant in the niceties of the language, he, upon some occasions discovered, even in these, a considerable degree of critical acumen. Mr. Dalzel, Professor of Greek at Edinburgh, whose skill in it is unquestionable, mentioned to me, in very liberal terms, the impression which was made upon him by Johnson, in a conversation which they had in London concerning that language. As Johnson, therefore,

[7] Mr. Cumberland assures me, that he was always treated with great courtesy by Dr. Johnson, who, in his 'Letters to Mrs. Thrale," Vol. II. p. 68, thus speaks of that learned, ingenious, and accomplished gentleman: "The want of company is an inconvenience, but Mr. Cumberland is a million."

1784. Ætat. 75. was undoubtedly one of the first Latin scholars in modern times, let us not deny to his fame some additional splendour from Greek.

I shall now fulfil my promise of exhibiting specimens of various sorts of imitation of Johnson's style.

In the "Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, 1787," there is an "Essay on the Style of Dr. Samuel Johnson," by the Reverend Robert Burrows, whose respect for the great object of his criticism[8] is thus evinced in the concluding paragraph: I have singled him out from the whole body of English writers, because his universally-acknowledged beauties would be most apt to induce imitation; and I have treated rather on his faults, than his perfections, because an essay might comprize all the observations I could make upon his faults, while volumes would not be sufficient for a treatise on his perfections."

Mr. Burrowes has analysed the composition of Johnson, and pointed out its peculiarities with much acuteness; and I would recommend a careful perusal of his Essay to those, who being captivated by the union of perspicuity and splendour which the writings of Johnson contain, without having a sufficient portion of his vigour of mind, may be in danger of becoming bad copyists of his manner. I, however, cannot but observe, and I observe it to his credit, that this learned gentleman has himself caught no

[8] We must smile at a little inaccuracy of metaphor in the Preface to the Transactions, which is written by Mr. Burrowes. The *critick of the style of* Johnson having, with a just zeal for literature, observed, that the whole nation are called on to exert themselves, afterwards says: "They are *called on* by every *tye* which can have a laudable influence on the heart of man."

mean degree of the expansion and harmony, which, independent of all other circumstances, characterise the sentences of Johnson. Thus, in the Preface to the volume in which the Essay appears, we find, "If it be said that in societies of this sort, too much attention is frequently bestowed on subjects barren and speculative, it may be answered, that no one science is so little connected with the rest, as not to afford many principles whose use may extend considerably beyond the science to which they primarily belong; and that no proposition is so purely theoretical as to be totally incapable of being applied to practical purposes. There is no apparent connection between duration and the cycloidal arch, the properties of which duly attended to, have furnished us with our best regulated methods of measuring time: and he who has made himself master of the nature and affections of the logarithmick curve, is not aware that he has advanced considerably towards ascertaining the proportionable density of the air at its various distances from the surface of the earth."

The ludicrous imitators of Johnson's style are innumerable. Their general method is to accumulate hard words, without considering, that, although he was fond of introducing them occasionally, there is not a single sentence in all his writings where they are crowded together, as in the first verse of the following imaginary Ode by him to Mrs. Thrale,[9] which appeared in the newspapers:

[9] Johnson's wishing to unite himself with this rich widow, was much talked of, but I believe without foundation. The report, however, gave occasion to a poem, not without characteristical merit, entitled, "Ode to Mrs. Thrale, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D. on their supposed approaching Nuptials;" printed for Mr. Faulder,

1784. Ætat. 75.

"*Cervisial coctor's viduate* dame,
"*Opins't* thou his gigantick fame,
"*Procumbing* at that shrine;
"Shall, *catenated* by thy charms,
"A captive in thy *ambient* arms,
"*Perennially* be thine?"

This, and a thousand other such attempts, are totally unlike the original, which the writers imagined they were turning into ridicule. There is not similarity enough for burlesque, or even for caricature.

Mr. COLMAN, in his "Prose on several occasions," has "A Letter from LEXIPHANES; containing Proposals for a *Glossary* or *Vocabulary* of the *Vulgar Tongue:* intended as a Supplement to a larger DICTIONARY." It is evidently meant as a sportive sally of ridicule on Johnson, whose style is thus imitated, without being grossly overcharged. "It is easy to foresee, that the idle and illiterate will complain that

in Bond-street.—I shall quote as a specimen, the first three stanzas:

"If e'er my fingers touch'd the lyre,
"In satire fierce, in pleasure gay;
Shall not my THRALIA's smiles inspire?
"Shall SAM refuse the sportive lay?

"My dearest Lady! view your slave,
"Behold him as your very *Scrub*;
"Eager to write as authour grave,
"Or govern well, the brewing-tub.

"To rich felicity thus raised,
"My bosom glows with amorous fire
"Porter no longer shall be praised,
"'Tis I MYSELF am *Thrale's Entire*."

I have increased their labours by endeavouring to diminish them; and that I have explained what is more easy by what is more difficult—*ignotum per ignotius*. I expect, on the other hand, the liberal acknowledgements of the learned. He who is buried in scholastick retirement, secluded from the assemblies of the gay, and remote from the circles of the polite, will at once comprehend the definitions, and be grateful for such a seasonable and necessary elucidation of his mother-tongue." Annexed to this letter is a short specimen of the work, thrown together in a vague and desultory manner, not even adhering to alphabetical concatenation.[1] 1784. Ætat. 75.

The serious imitators of Johnson's style, whether intentionally or by the imperceptible effect of its strength and animation, are, as I have had already occasion to observe, so many, that I might introduce quotations from a numerous body of writers in our language, since he appeared in the literary world. I shall point out the following:

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D. D.

" In other parts of the globe, man, in his rudest state, appears as Lord of the creation, giving law to

1 " *Higledy piggledy*,—Conglomeration and confusion.

" *Hodge-podge*,—A culinary mixture of heterogeneous ingredients: applied metaphorically to all discordant combinations.

" *Tit for Tat*,—Adequate retaliation.

" *Shilly Shally*,—Hesitation and irresolution.

" *Fee! fa! fum!*—Gigantick intonations.

" *Rigmarole*,—Discourse, incoherent and rhapsodical,

" *Crincum-crancum*,—Lines of irregularity and involution.

" *Ding dong*,—Tintinaqulary chimes, used metaphorically to ignify dispatch and vehemence."

1784. Ætat. 75. various tribes of animals which he has tamed and reduced to subjection. The Tartar follows his prey on the horse which he has reared, or tends his numerous herds which furnish him both with food and clothing; the Arab has rendered the camel docile, and avails himself of its persevering strength; the Laplander has formed the rein-deer to be subservient to his will; and even the people of Kamschatka have trained their dogs to labour. This command over the inferiour creatures is one of the noblest prerogatives of man, and among the greatest efforts of his wisdom and power. Without this, his dominion is incomplete. He is a monarch who has no subjects; a master without servants; and must perform every operation by the strength of his own arm."[2]

EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

"Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord the laws of Society lose their force, and their place is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of pity."[3]

MISS BURNEY.

"My family, mistaking ambition for honour, and rank for dignity, have long planned a splendid con-

[2] "History of America:" Vol. I. quarto, p. 332.
[3] "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. I. Chap. IV.

nection for me, to which, though my invariable repugnance has stopped any advances, their wishes and their views immoveably adhere. I am but too certain they will now listen to no other. I dread, therefore, to make a trial where I despair of success; I know not how to risk a prayer with those who may silence me by a command."[4] 1784. Ætat. 75.

Reverend Mr. NARES.[5]

"In an enlightened and improving age, much perhaps is not to be apprehended from the inroads of mere caprice; at such a period it will generally be perceived, that needless irregularity is the worst of all deformities, and that nothing is so truly elegant in language as the simplicity of unviolated analogy. —Rules will, therefore, be observed, so far as they are known and acknowledged: but, at the same time, the desire of improvement having been once excited will not remain inactive; and its efforts, unless assisted by knowledge, as much as they are prompted by zeal, will not unfrequently be found pernicious; so that the very persons whose intention it is to perfect the instrument of reason, will deprave and disorder it unknowingly. At such a time, then, it becomes peculiarly necessary that the analogy of

4 "Cecilia," Book VII. Chap. I.

5 The passages which I quote is taken from that gentleman's "ELEMENTS OF ORTHOEPY; containing a distinct View of the whole Analogy of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE, so far as relates to *Pronunciation, Accent, and Quantity*," London, 1784. I beg leave to offer my particular acknowledgements to the authour of a work of uncommon merit and great utility. I know no book which contains, in the same compass, more learning, polite literature, sound sense, accuracy of arrangement, and perspicuity of expression.

1784. Ætat. 75. language should be fully examined and understood; that its rules should be carefully laid down; and that it should be clearly known how much it contains, which being already right should be defended from change and violation; how much it has that demands amendment; and how much that, for fear of greater inconveniencies, must, perhaps, be left, unaltered, though irregular."

A distinguished authour in "THE MIRROR,"[6] a periodical paper, published at Edinburgh, has imitated Johnson very closely. Thus, in No. 16.—"The effects of the return of spring have been frequently remarked as well in relation to the human mind as to the animal and vegetable world. The reviving power of this season has been traced from the fields to the herds that inhabit them, and from the lower classes of beings up to man. Gladness and joy are described as prevailing through universal Nature, animating the low of the cattle, the carol of the birds, and the pipe of the shepherd."

The Reverend Dr. Knox, master of Tunbridge school, appears to have the *imitari aveo* of Johnson's style perpetually in his mind; and to his assiduous, though not servile, study of it, we may partly ascribe the extensive popularity of his writings.[7]

[6] That collection was presented to Dr. Johnson, I believe by its authours; and I heard him speak very well of it.

[7] It were to be wished, that he had imitated that great man in every respect, and had not followed the example of Dr. Adam Smith, in ungraciously attacking his venerable *Alma Mater*, Oxford. It must, however, be observed, that he is much less to blame than Smith: he only objects to certain particulars; Smith to the whole institution; though indebted for much of his learn-

In his "Essays, Moral and Literary," No. 3, we find the following passage:—"The polish of external grace may indeed be deferred till the approach of manhood. When solidity is obtained by pursuing the modes prescribed by our fore-fathers, then may the file be used. The firm substance will bear attrition, and the lustre then acquired will be durable." 1784. Ætat. 75.

There is, however, one in No. 11, which is blown up into such tumidity, as to be truly ludicrous. The writer means to tell us, that Members of Parliament, who have run in debt by extravagance, will sell their votes to avoid an arrest,[8] which he thus expresses;—"They who build houses and collect costly pictures and furnitures, with the money of an honest artisan or mechanick, will be very glad of emancipation from the hands of a bailiff, by a sale of their senatorial suffrage."

ing to an exhibition which he enjoyed, for many years at Balliol College. Neither of them, however, will do any hurt to the noblest university in the world. While I animadvert on what appears to me, exceptionable in some of the works of Dr. Knox, I cannot refuse due praise to others of his productions; particularly his sermons, and to the spirit with which he maintains, against presumptuous hereticks, the consolatory doctrines peculiar to the Christian Revelation. This he has done in a manner equally strenuous and conciliating. Neither ought I to omit mentioning a remarkable instance of his candour: Notwithstanding the wide difference of our opinions, upon the important subject of University education, in a letter to me concerning this Work, he thus expresses himself: "I thank you for the very great entertainment your Life of Johnson gives me. It is a most valuable work. Yours is a new species of biography. Happy for Johnson, that he had so able a recorder of his wit and wisdom."

"[8] Dr. Knox, in his "Moral and Literary" abstraction, may be excused for not knowing the political regulations of his country. No senator can be in the hands of a bailiff.

1784. Ætat. 75. But I think the most perfect imitation of Johnson is a professed one, entitled "A Criticism on Gray's Elegy in a Country Church-Yard," said to be written by Mr. Young, Professor of Greek, at Glasgow, and of which let him have the credit, unless a better title can be shewn. It has not only the particularities of Johnson's style, but that very species of literary discussion and illustration for which he was eminent. Having already quoted so much from others, I shall refer the curious to this performance, with an assurance of much entertainment.

Yet whatever merit there may be in any imitations of Johnson's style, every good judge must see that they are obviously different from the originial; for all of them are either deficient in its force, or overloaded with its peculiarities; and the powerful sentiment to which it is suited is not to be found.

Johnson's affection for his departed relations seemed to grow warmer as he approached nearer to the time when he might hope to see them again. It probably appeared to him that he should upbraid himself with unkind inattention, were he to leave the world without having paid a tribute of respect to their memory.

"TO MR. GREEN, APOTHECARY, AT LICHFIELD.[9]

"DEAR SIR,

"I have enclosed the Epitaph for my Father, Mother, and Brother, to be all engraved on the large size, and laid in the middle aisle in St. Michael's church, which I request the clergyman and church-wardens to permit.

[9] See Vol. II. p. 485.

"The first care must be to find the exact place of interment, that the stone may protect the bodies. Then let the stone be deep, massy, and hard; and do not let the difference of ten pounds, or more, defeat our purpose. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"I have enclosed ten pounds, and Mrs. Porter will pay you ten more, which I gave her for the same purpose. What more is wanted shall be sent; and I beg that all possible haste may be made, for I wish to have it done while I am yet alive. Let me know, dear Sir, that you receive this.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

Dec. 2. 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

"TO MRS. LUCY PORTER, IN LICHFIELD.[1]

"DEAR MADAM,

"I AM very ill, and desire your prayers. I have sent Mr. Green the Epitaph, and a power to call on you for ten pounds.

"I laid this summer a stone over Tetty, in the chapel of Bromley, in Kent. The inscription is in Latin, of which this is the English. [Here a translation.]

"That this is done, I thought it fit that you should know. What care will be taken of us, who can tell? May GOD pardon and bless us, for JESUS CHRIST's sake.

"I am, &c.

"Dec. 2, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON."

[1] [This lady, whose name so frequently occurs in the course of this work, survived Dr. Johnson just thirteen months. She died at Lichfield in her 71st year, January 13, 1786, and bequeathed the principal part of her fortune to the Rev. Mr. Pearson, of Lichfield. M.]

1784. Ætat. 75. My readers are now, at last, to behold SAMUEL JOHNSON preparing himself for that doom, from which the most exalted powers afford no exemption to man. Death had always been to him an object of terrour; so that, though by no means happy, he still clung to life with an eagerness at which many have wondered. At any time when he was ill, he was very much pleased to be told that he looked better. An ingenious member of the *Eumelian Club*[2] informs me, that upon one occasion, when he said to him that he saw health returning to his cheek, Johnson seized him by the hand and exclaimed, "Sir, you are one of the kindest friends I ever had."

His own state of his views of futurity will appear truly rational; and may, perhaps, impress the unthinking with seriousness.

"You know, (says he,)[3] I never thought confidence with respect to futurity, any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing; wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those faults, of which it is, perhaps, itself an aggravation; and goodness, always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficience to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption, never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled, nor what is wanting in the crime supplied by penitence.

"This is the state of the best; but what must be

[2] A Club in London, founded by the learned and ingenious physician, Dr. Ash, in honour of whose name it was called *Eumelian*, from the Greek Ευμελιας: though it was warmly contended, and even put to a vote, that it should have the more obvious appellation of *Fraxinean*, from the Latin.

[3] Mrs. Thrale's Collection, March 10, 1784. Vol. II. p. 3.

the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt, it can be no virtue to feign."

1784. Ætat. 75.

His great fear of death, and the strange dark manner in which Sir John Hawkins imparts the uneasiness which he expressed on account of offences with which he charged himself, may give occasion to injurious suspicions, as if there had been something of more than ordinary criminality weighing upon his conscience. On that account, therefore, as well as from the regard to truth which he inculcated,[4] I am to mention, (with all possible respect and delicacy, however,) that his conduct, after he came to London, and had associated with Savage and others, was not so strictly virtuous, in one respect, as when he was a younger man. It was well known, that his amorous inclinations were uncommonly strong and impetuous. He owned to many of his friends, that he used to take women of the town to taverns, and hear them relate their history. —In short, it must not be concealed, that, like many other good and pious men, among whom we may place the apostle Paul upon his own authority, Johnson was not free from propensities which were ever "warring against the law of his mind,"—and that in his combats with them, he was sometimes overcome.

Here let the profane and licentious pause; let them not thoughtlessly say that Johnson was an

[4] See what he said to Mr. Malone, pp. 53, 54 of this volume.

1784. *hypocrite*, or that his *principles* were not firm, because his *practice* was not uniformly conformable to what
Ætat. 75. he professed.

Let the question be considered independent of moral and religious associations; and no man will deny that thousands, in many instances, act against conviction. Is a prodigal, for example, an *hypocrite*, when he owns he is satisfied that his extravagance will bring him to ruin and misery? We are *sure* he *believes* it; but immediate inclination, strengthened by indulgence, prevails over that belief in influencing his conduct. Why then shall credit be refused to the *sincerity* of those who acknowledge their persuasion of moral and religious duty, yet sometimes fail of living as it requires? I heard Dr. Johnson once observe, "There is something noble in publishing truth, though it condemns one's self."[5] And one who said in his presence, "he had no notion of people being in earnest in their good professions, whose practice was not suitable to them," was thus reprimanded by him:—"Sir, are you so grossly ignorant of human nature as not to know that a man may be very sincere in good principles, without having good practice?"[6]

But let no man encourage or soothe himself in "presumptuous sin," from knowing that Johnson

[5] Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 3d. edit. p. 209. On the same subject, in his Letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated Nov. 29. 1783, he makes the following just observation: "Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression; we must always purpose to do more or better than in time past. The mind is enlarged and elevated by mere purposes, though they end as they began, by airy contemplation. We compare and judge, though we do not practise."

[6] Ibid. p. 374.

was sometimes hurried into indulgences which he thought criminal. I have exhibited this circumstance as a shade in so great a character, both from my sacred love of truth, and to shew that he was not so weakly scrupulous as he has been represented by those who imagine that the sins, of which a deep sense was upon his mind, were merely such little venial trifles as pouring milk into his tea on Good-Friday. His understanding will be defended by my statement, if his consistency of conduct be in some degree impaired. But what wise man would, for momentary gratifications, deliberately subject himself to suffer such uneasiness as we find was experienced by Johnson in reviewing his conduct as compared with his notion of the ethicks of the gospel? Let the following passages be kept in remembrance: "O, GOD, giver and preserver of all life, by whose power I was created, and by whose providence I am sustained, look down upon me with tenderness and mercy; grant that I may not have been created to be finally destroyed; that I may not be preserved to add wickedness to wickedness."[7]—"O, LORD, let me not sink into total depravity; look down upon me, and rescue me at last from the captivity of sin."[8]—"Almighty and most merciful Father, who hast continued my life from year to year, grant that by longer life I may become less desirous of sinful pleasures, and more careful of eternal happiness."[9]—"Let not my years be multiplied to increase my guilt; but as my age advances, let me become more pure in my thoughts, more regular in my desires, and more obedient to thy laws."[1]

1784. Ætat. 75.

[7] Prayers and Meditations, p. 47.
[8] Ibid. p. 68.
[9] Ibid. p. 84.
[1] Ibid. p. 120.

1784. "Forgive, O merciful LORD, whatever I have done
Ætat. 75. contrary to thy laws. Give me such a sense of my wickedness as may produce true contrition and effectual repentance; so that when I shall be called into another state, I may be received among the sinners to whom sorrow and reformation have obtained pardon, for JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen."[2]

Such was the distress of mind, such the penitence of Johnson, in his hours of privacy, and in his devout approaches to his Maker. His *sincerity*, therefore, must appear to every candid mind unquestionable.

It is of essential consequence to keep in view, that there was in this excellent man's conduct no false principle of *commutation*, no *deliberate* indulgence in sin, in consideration of a counterbalance of duty. His offending, and his repenting, were distinct and separate:[3] and when we consider his almost unexampled attention to truth, his inflexible integrity, his constant piety, who will dare to "cast a stone at him?" Besides, let it never be fogotten, that he cannot be charged with any offence indicating badness of *heart*, any thing dishonest, base, or malignant; but, that, on the contrary, he was charitable in an extraordinary degree: so that even in one of his own rigid judgments of himself, (Easter-eve, 1781,) while he says, "I have corrected no external habits; he is obliged to own, "I hope

[2] Prayers and Meditations, p. 130.

[3] Dr. Johnson related, with very earnest approbation, a story of a gentleman, who, in an impulse of passion, overcame the virtue of a young woman. When she said to him, "I am afraid we have done wrong!" he answered, "Yes, we have done wrong;—for I would not *debauch her mind*."

that since my last communion I have advanced, by pious reflections, in my submission to GOD, and my benevolence to man."[4]

I am conscious that this is the most difficult and dangerous part of my biographical work, and I cannot but be very anxious concerning it. I trust that I have got through it, preserving at once my regard to truth,—to my friend,—and to the interests of virtue and religion. Nor can I apprehend that more harm can ensue from the knowledge of the irregularities of Johnson, guarded as I have stated it, than from knowing that Addison and Parnell were intemperate in the use of wine; which he himself, in his Lives of those celebrated writers and pious men, has not forborne to record.

It is not my intention to give a very minute detail of the particulars of Johnson's remaining days, of whom it was now evident, that the crisis was fast approaching, when he must "*die like men, and fall like one of the Princes.*" Yet it will be instructive, as well as gratifying to the curiosity of my readers, to record a few circumstances, on the authenticity of which they may perfectly rely, as I have been at the utmost pains to obtain an accurate account of his last illness, from the best authority.

Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Dr. Butter, physicians, generously attended him, without accepting any fees, as did Mr. Cruikshank, surgeon; and all that could be done from professional skill and ability, was tried, to prolong a life so truly valuable. He himself, indeed, having, on account of his very bad constitution, been perpetually

[4] Prayers and Meditations, p. 192.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

1784. Ætat. 75. applying himself to medical inquiries, united his own efforts with those of the gentlemen who attended him; and imagining that the dropsical collection of water which oppressed him might be drawn off by making incisions in his body, he, with his usual resolute defiance of pain, cut deep, when he thought that his surgeon had done it too tenderly.[5]

About eight or ten days before his death, when Dr. Brocklesby paid him his morning visit, he seemed very low and desponding, and said, "I have been as a dying man all night." He then emphatically broke out in the words of Shakspeare,

> "Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseas'd;
> "Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
> "Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
> "And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
> "Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> "Which weighs upon the heart?"

To which Dr. Brocklesby readily answer'd, from the same great poet:

> "——————— therein the patient
> "Must minister to himself."

Johnson expressed himself much satisfied with the application.

[5] This bold experiment, Sir John Hawkins has related in such a manner as to suggest a charge against Johnson of intentionally hastening his end; a charge so very inconsistent with his character in every respect, that it is injurious even to refute it, as Sir John has thought it necessary to do. It is evident, that what Johnson did in hopes of relief, indicated an extraordinary eagerness to retard his dissolution.

On another day after this, when talking on the subject of prayer, Dr. Brocklesby repeated from Juvenal, 1784. Ætat. 75.

"*Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corporæ sano,*"

and so on to the end of the tenth satire; but in running it quickly over, he happened, in the line,

"*Qui spatium vitæ extremum inter munera ponat,*"

to pronounce *supremum* for *extremum*; at which Johnson's critical ear instantly took offence, and discoursing vehemently on the unmetrical effect of such a lapse, he shewed himself as full as ever of the spirit of the grammarian.

Having no other relations,[6] it had been for some

[6] [The authour in a former page has shewn the injustice of Sir John Hawkins's charge against Johnson, with respct to a person of the name of Heely, whom he has inaccurately represented as a relation of Johnson's. See p. 400 —That Johnson was anxious to discover whether any of his relations were living, is evinced by the following letter, written not long before he made his Will:

"TO THE REV. DR. VYSE, IN LAMBETH.

"SIR,

"I AM desirous to know whether Charles Scrimshaw of Woodsease (I think,) in your father's neighbourhood be now living; what is his condition, and where he may be found. If you can conveniently make any inquiry about him, and can do it without delay, it will be an act of great kindness to me, he being very nearly related to me. I beg [you] to pardon this trouble.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON,"

"Bolt-court, Fleet-street,
Nov. 29, 1784.

In conformity to the wish expressed in the preceding letter, an nquiry was made, but no descendants of Charles Scrimshaw or

1784. Ætat. 75. time Johnson's intention to make a liberal provision for his faithful servant, Mr. Francis Barber, whom he looked upon as particularly under his protection, and whom he had all along treated truly as an humble friend. Having asked Dr. Brocklesby what would be a proper annuity to a favourite servant, and being answered that it must depend on the circumstances of the master; and, that in the case of a nobleman, fifty pounds a year was considered as an adequate reward for many years' faithful service; —"Then, (said Johnson,) shall I be *nobilissimus*, for I mean to leave Frank seventy pounds a year, and I desire you to tell him so." It is strange, however, to think, that Johnson was not free from that general weakness of being averse to execute a will, so that he delayed it from time to time; and had it not been for Sir John Hawkins's repeatedly urging it, I think it is probable that his kind resolution would not have been fulfilled. After making one, which, as Sir John Hawkins informs us, extended no further than the promised annuity, Johnson's final disposition of his property was established by a Will and Codicil, of which copies are subjoined.[7]

of his sisters, were discovered to be living. Dr. Vyse informs me, that Dr. Johnson told him, "he was disappointed in the inquiries he had made after his relations." There is therefore no ground whatsoever for supposing that he was unmindful of them, or neglected them. M.]

[7] "IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN. I, SAMUEL JOHNSON, being in full possession of my faculties, but fearing this night may put an end to my life, do ordain this my last Will and Testament. I bequeath to GOD, a soul polluted by many sins, but I hope purified by JESUS CHRIST.—I leave seven hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Bennet Langton, Esq.: three hundred pounds in the hands of Mr. Barclay and Mr. Perkins, brewers; one hundred

The consideration of numerous papers of which he was possessed, seems to have struck Johnson's mind, 1784. Ætat. 75.

and fifty pounds in the hands of Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore; one thousand pounds, three *per cent.* annuities in the publick funds; and one hundred pounds now lying by me in ready money: all these before-mentioned sums and property I leave, I say, to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, of Doctors Commons, in trust, for the following uses:—That is to say, to pay to the representatives of the late William Innys, bookseller, in St. Paul's Church-yard, the sum of two hundred pounds; to Mrs. White, my female servant, one hundred pounds stock in the three *per cent.* annuities aforesaid. The rest of the aforesaid sums of money and property, together with my books, plate, and househould furniture, I leave to the before-mentioned Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir, John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, also in trust, to be applied, after paying my debts, to the use of Francis Barber, my man-servant, a negro, in such manner as they shall judge most fit and available to his benefit. And I appoint the aforesaid Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott, sole executors of this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills and testaments whatever. In witness whereof I hereunto subscribe my name, and affix my seal, this eighth day of December, 1784.

"Sam. Johnson, (L. S.)

"Signed, sealed, published, declared and delivered, by the said testator, as his last will and testament, in the presence of us, the word *two* being first inserted in the opposite page.

"George Strahan.
"John Desmoulins."

"By way of Codicil to my last will and testament, I, Samuel Johnson, give, devise, and bequeath, my messuage or tenement situate at Lichfield, in the county of Stafford, with the appurtenances in the tenure and occupation of Mrs. Bond, of Lichfield aforesaid, or of Mr. Hinchman, her under-tenant, to my executors, in trust, to sell and dispose of the same; and the money arising from such sale I give and bequeath as follows, viz. to Thomas and Benjamin, the sons of Fisher Johnson, late of Leicester, and —— Whiting, daughter of Thomas Johnson, late of

1784. with a sudden anxiety, and as they were in great
Ætat. 75. confusion, it is much to be lamented that he had not

Coventry, and the grand-daughter of the said Thomas Johnson, one full and equal fourth part each; but in case there shall be more grand-daughters than one of the said Thomas Johnson, living at the time of my decease, I give and bequeath the part or share of that one to and equally between such grand-daughters. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Mr. Rogers, of Berkley, near Froom, in the county of Somerset, the sum of one hundred pounds, requesting him to apply the same towards the maintenance of Elizabeth Herne, a lunatick. I also give and bequeath to my god-children, the son and daughter of Mauritius Lowe, painter, each of them, one hundred pounds of my stock in the three *per cent.* consolidated annuities, to be applied and disposed of by and at the discretion of my executors, in the education or Settlement in the world of them my said legatees. Also I give and bequeath to Sir John Hawkins, one of my Executors, the Annales Ecclesiastici of Baronius, and Holinshed's and Stowe's Chronicles, and also an octavo Common Prayer-Book. To Bennet Langton, Esq. I give and bequeath my Polyglot Bible. To Sir Joshua Reynolds, my great French Dictionary, by Martiniere, and my own copy of my folio English Dictionary, of the last revison. To Dr. William Scott, one of my Executors, the Dictionnaire de Commerce, and Lectius's edition of the Greek Poets. To Mr. Windham, Poetæ Græci Heroici per Henricum Stephanum. To the Rev. Mr. Strahan, vicar of Islington, in Middlesex, Mill's Greek Testament, Beza's Greek Testament, by Stephens, all my Latin Bibles, and my Greek Bible, by Wechelius. To Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, and Mr. Cruikshank, the surgeon who attended me, Mr. Holder, my apothecary, Gerard Hamilton, Esq. Mrs Gardiner, of Snow-hill, Mrs. Frances Reynolds, Mr. Hoole, and the Reverend Mr. Hoole, his son, each a book at their election, to keep as a token of remembrance. I also give and bequeath to Mr. John Desmoulins, two hundred pounds consolidated three *per cent.* annuities: and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian Master, the sum of five pounds, to be laid out in books of piety for his own use. And whereas the said Bennet Langton hath agreed in consideration of the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, mentioned in my will to be in his hands, to grant and secure an annuity of seventy pounds payable during the life of me and my

entrusted some faithful and discreet person with the care and selection of them; instead of which, he, in

servant, Francis Barber, and the life of the survivor of us, to Mr. George Stubbs, in trust for us; my mind and will is, that in case of my decease before the said agreement shall be perfected, the said sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, and the bond for securing the said sum, shall go to the said Francis Barber; and I hereby give and bequeath to him the same, in lieu of the bequest in his favour, contained in my said will. And I hereby empower my Executors to deduct and retain all expences that shall or may be incurred in the execution of my said Will, or of this Codicil thereto, out of such estate and effects as I shall die possessed of. All the rest, residue, and remainder, of my estate and effects I give and bequeath to my said Executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his Executors, and Administrators. Witness my hand and seal, this ninth day of December, 1784.

"SAM. JOHNSON, (L. S.)

"Signed, sealed, published, declared, and delivered, by the said Samuel Johnson, as, and for a Codicil to his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who, in his presence, and at his request, and also in the presence of each other, have hereto subscribed our names as witnesses.

"JOHN COPELY.
"WILLIAM GIBSON.
"HENRY COLE."

Upon these testamentary deeds it is proper to make a few observations.

His express declaration with his dying breath as a Christian, as it had been often practised in such solemn writings, was of real consequence from this great man, for the conviction of a mind equally acute and strong, might well overbalance the doubts of others who were his contemporaries. The expression *polluted*, may, to some, convey an impression of more than ordinary contamination; but that is not warranted by its genuine meaning, as appears from "The Rambler," No. 42. The same word is used in the will of Dr. Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln, who was piety itself.

His legacy of two hundied pounds to the representatives of Mr.

1784. Ætat. 75. a precipitate manner, burnt large masses of them, with little regard, as I apprehend, to discrimination. Not

Innys, bookseller, in St. Paul's Church-yard, proceeded from a very worthy motive. He told Sir John Hawkins, that his father having become a bankrupt, Mr. Innys had assisted him with money or credit to continue his business. "This, (said he,) I consider as an obligation on me to be grateful to his descendants."

The amount of his property proved to be considerably more than he had supposed it to be. Sir John Hawkins estimates the bequest to Francis Barber at a sum little short of fifteen hundred pounds, including an annuity of seventy pounds to be paid to him by Mr. Langton, in consideration of seventy hundred and fifty pounds, which Johnson had lent to that gentleman. Sir John seems not a little angry at this bequest, and mutters "a caveat against ostentatious bounty and favour to negroes." But surely when a man has money entirely of his own acquisition, especially when he has no near relations, he may, without blame, dispose of it as he pleases, and with great propriety to a faithful servant, Mr. Barber, by the recommendation of his master, retired to Lichfield, where he might pass the rest of his days in comfort.

It has been objected that Johnson has omitted many of his best friends, when leaving books to several as tokens of his last remembrance. The names of Dr. Adams, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Burney, Mr. Hector, Mr. Murphy, the Author of this work, and others who were intimate with him, are not to be found in his Will. This may be accounted for by considering, that as he was very near his dissolution at the time, he probably mentioned such as happened to occur to him; and that he may have recollected, that he had formerly shewn others such proofs of his regard, that it was not necessary to crowd his Will with their names. Mrs. Lucy Porter was much displeased that nothing was left to her; but besides what I have now stated, she should have considered, that she had left nothing to Johnson by her Will, which was made during his life-time, as appeared at her decease.

His enumerating several persons in one group, and leaving them "each a book at their election, might possibly have given occasion to a curious question as to the order of choice, had they not luckily fixed on different books. His library, though by no means handsome in its appearance, was sold by Mr. Christie, for two hundred and forty-seven pounds, nine shillings; many people be-

that I suppose we have thus been deprived of any 1784. compositions which he had ever intended for the Ætat. 75. publick eye; but from what escaped the flames, I judge that many curious circumstances relating both to himself and other literary characters, have perished.

Two very valuable articles, I am sure, we have lost, which were two quarto volumes, containing a full, fair, and most particular account of his own life, from his earliest recollection. I owned to him, that having accidentally seen them, I had read a great deal in them; and apologizing for the liberty I had taken, asked him if I could help it. He placidly answered, "Why, Sir, I do not think you could have helped it." I said that I had, for once in my life, felt half an inclination to commit theft. It had come into my mind to carry off those two volumes, and never see him more. Upon my enquiring how

ing desirous to have a book which had belonged to Johnson. In many of them he had written little notes: sometimes tender memorials of his departed wife; as, "This was dear Tetty's book:" sometimes occasional remarks of different sorts. Mr. Lysons, of Clifford's Inn, has favoured me with the two following:

"In "Holy Rules and Helps to Devotions by Bryan Duppa, Lord Bishop of Winton," "*Preces quidam videtur diligenter tractasse; spero non inauditus.*"

In "The Rossicrucian infallible Axiomata, by John Heydon, Gent." prefixed to which are some verses addressed to the authour, signed Ambr. Waters, A. M. Coll. Ex. Oxon. "*These Latin verses were written to Hobbes by Bathurst, upon his Treatise on Human Nature, and have no relation to the book.——An odd fraud.*

[Francis Barber, Dr. Johnson's principal legatee, died in the infirmary at Stafford, after undergoing a painful operation, Feb. 13, 1801. M.]

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASW...

1784. Ætat. 75. this would have affected him, "Sir, (said he,) I believe I should have gone mad."[8]

During his last illness, Johnson experienced the steady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Mr. Hoole has drawn up a narrative of what passed in the visits which he paid him during that time, from the 10th of November to the 13th of December, the day of his death, inclusive, and has favoured me with a perusal of it, with permission to make extracts, which I have done. Nobody was more attentive to him than Mr. Langton,[9] to whom he tenderly said, *Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.* And I think it highly to the honour of Mr. Windham, that his

[8] One of these volumes, Sir John Hawkins informs us, he put into his pocket; for which the excuse he states is, that he meant to preserve it from falling into the hands of a person whom he describes so as to make it sufficiently clear who is meant; "having strong reasons, (said he,) to suspect that this man might find and make an ill use of the book." Why Sir John should suppose that the gentleman alluded to would act in this manner, he has not thought fit to explain. But what he did was not approved of by Johnson; who, upon being acquainted of it without delay by a friend, expressed great indignation, and warmly insisted on the book being delivered up; and, afterwards, in the supposition of his missing it, without knowing by whom it had been taken, he said, "Sir, I should have gone out of the world distrusting half mankind." Sir John next day wrote a letter to Johnson, assigning reasons for his conduct; upon which Johnson observed to Mr. Langton, "Bishop Sanderson could not have dictated a better letter. I could almost say, *Melius est sic penituisse quam non errâsse.*" The agitation into which Johnson was thrown by this incident, probably made him hastily burn those precious records which must ever be regretted.

[9] [Mr. Langton, whose name so often occurs in these volumes, survived Johnson several years. He died at Southampton, Dec. 18, 1801. M.]

important occupations as an active statesman did not 1784.
prevent him from paying assiduous respect to the Ætat. 75.
dying Sage whom he revered. Mr. Langton informs me, that, "one day he found Mr. Burke and four or five more friends sitting with Johnson. Mr. Burke said to him, 'I am afraid, Sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you.'—'No, Sir, (said Johnson,) it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state, indeed, when your company would not be a delight to me.' Mr. Burke, in a tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly affected, replied, 'My dear Sir, you have always been too good to me.' Immediately afterwards he went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquantance of these two eminent men."

The following particulars of his conversation within a few days of his death, I give on the authority of Mr. John Nichols:[1]

[1] On the same undoubted authority, I give a few articles, which should have been inserted in chronological order; but which, now that they are before me, I should be sorry to omit:

"In 1736, Dr. Johnson had a particular inclination to have been engaged as an assistant to the Reverend Mr. Budworth, then head master of the Grammar-school, at Brewood, in Staffordshire, 'an excellent person, who possessed every talent of a perfect instructor of youth, in a degree which, (to use the words of one of the brightest ornaments of literature, the Reverend Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester,) has been rarely found in any of that profession since the days of Quintilian.' Mr. Budworth, 'who was less known in his life-time, from that obscure situation to which the caprice of fortune oft condemns the most accomplished characters, than his highest merit deserved,' had been bred under Mr. Blackwell, at Market Bosworth, where Johnson was some time an usher; which might naturally lead to the application. Mr. Budworth was certainly no stranger to the learning or abilities of

1784. Ætat. 75. "He said, that the Parliamentary Debates were the only part of his writings which then gave him

Johnson, as he more than once lamented his having been under the necessity of declining the engagement, from an apprehension that the paralytick affection, under which our great Philologist laboured through life, might become the object of imitation or of ridicule, among his pupils."—Captain Budworth, his grandson, has confirmed to me this anecdote.

"Among the early associates of Johnson, at St. John's Gate, was Samuel Boyse, well known by his ingenious productions; and not less noted for his imprudence. It was not unusual for Boyce to be a customer to the pawnbrower. On one of these occasions, Dr. Johnson collected a sum of money to redeem his friend's clothes, which in two days after were pawned again. 'The sum, (said Johnson,) was collected by sixpences, at a time when to me sixpence was a serious consideration.'

"Speaking one day of a person for whom he had a real friendship, but in whom vanity was somewhat too predominant, he observed, that 'Kelly was so fond of displaying on his side-board the plate which he possessed, that he added to it his spurs. For my part (said he,) I never was master of a pair of spurs, but once; ond they are now at the bottom of the ocean. By the carelessness of Boswell's servant, they were dropped from the end of the boat, on our return from the Isle of Sky.'

The late Reverend Mr. Samuel Badcock, having been introduced to Dr. Johnson, by Mr. Nichols, some years before his death, thus expressed himself in a letter to that gentleman:

"How much I am obliged to you for the favour you did me in introducing me to Dr. Johnson! *Tantùm vidi Virgilium.* But to have seen him, and to have received a testimony of respect from him, was enough. I recollect all the conversation, and shall never forget one of his expressions.—Speaking of Dr. P*******, (whose writings, I saw, he estimated at a low rate,) he said, 'You have proved him as deficient in *probity* as he is in learning.' —I called him an '*Index-scholar*;' but he was not willing to allow him a claim even to that merit. He said, 'that he borrowed from those who had been borrowers themselves, and did not know that the mistakes he adopted had been answered by others.'—I often think of our short, but precious, visit to this great man. I shall consider it as a kind of an *æra* in my life.

6

any compunction: but that at the time he wrote them, he had no conception he was imposing upon the world, though they were frequently written from very slender materials, and often, from none at all,—the mere coinage of his own imagination. He never wrote any part of his works with equal velocity. Three columns of the Magazine, in an hour, was no uncommon effort, which was faster than most persons could have transcribed that quantity.

"Of his friend Cave, he always spoke with great affection. 'Yet, (said he,) Cave, (who never looked out of his window, but with a view to the Gentleman's Magazine,) was a penurious pay-master; he would contract for lines by the hundred, and expect the long hundred; but he was a good man, and always delighted to have his friends at his table."

"When talking of a regular edition of his own works, he said, that he had power, [from the booksellers,] to print such an edition, if his health admitted it; but had no power to assign over any edition, unless he could add notes, and so alter them as to make them new works; which his state of health forbade him to think of. I may possibly live, (said he,) or rather breath, three days, or perhaps three weeks; but find myself daily and gradually weaker."

"He said at another time, three or four days only before his death, speaking of the little fear he had of undergoing a chirurgical operation, 'I would give one of these legs for a year more of life, I mean of comfortable life, not such as that which I now suffer;'—and lamented much his inability to read during his hours of restlessness. 'I used formerly, (he added), when sleepless in bed, *to read like a Turk*.'

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWA

1784. Ætat. 75. "Whilst confined by his last illness, it was his regular practice to have the church-service read to him, by some attentive and friendly Divine. The Rev. Mr. Hoole performed this kind office in my presence for the last time, when, by his own desire, no more than the litany was read; in which his responses were in the deep and sonorous voice which Mr. Boswell has occasionally noticed, and with the most profound devotion that can be imagined. His hearing not being quite perfect, he more than once interrupted Mr. Hoole, with, 'Louder, my dear Sir, louder, I entreat you, or you pray in vain!'—and, when the service was ended, he, with great earnestness, turned round to an excellent lady who was present, saying, 'I thank you, Madam, very heartily, for your kindness in joining me in this solemn exercise. Live well, I conjure you; and you will not feel the compunction at the last, which I now feel." So truly humble were the thoughts which this great and good man entertained of his own approaches to religious perfection.

"He was earnestly invited to publish a volume of *Devotional Exercises*; but this, (though he listened to the proposal with much complacency, and a large sum of money was offered for it,) he declined, from motives of the sincerest modesty.

"He seriously entertained the thought of translating *Thuanus*. He often talked to me on the subject; and once, in particular, when I was rather wishing that he would favour the world, and gratify his Sovereign, by a Life of Spencer, (which he said that he would readily have done, had he been able to obtain any new materials for the purpose,) he added, 'I have been thinking again, Sir, of *Thuanus*: it would

not be the laborious task which you have supposed it. I should have no trouble but that of dictation, which would be performed as speedily as an amanuensis could write." 1784. Ætat. 75.

It is to the mutual credit of Johnson and Divines of different communions, that although he was a steady Church-of-England man, there was, nevertheless, much agreeable intercourse between him and them. Let me particularly name the late Mr. La Trobe, and Mr. Hutton, of the Moravian profession. His intimacy with the English Benedictines, at Paris, has been mentioned; and as an additional proof of the charity in which he lived with good men of the Romish Church, I am happy in this opportunity of recording his friendship with the Reverend Thomas Hussey, D. D. His Catholick Majesty's Chaplain of Embassy at the Court of London, that very respectable man, eminent not only for his powerful eloquence as a preacher, but for his various abilities and acquisitions.—Nay, though Johnson loved a Presbyterian the least of all, this did not prevent his having a long and uninterrupted social connection with the Reverend Dr. James Fordyce, who, since his death hath gratefully celebrated him in a warm strain of devotional composition.

Amidst the melancholy clouds which hung over the dying Johnson, his characteristical manner shewed itself on different occasions.

When Dr. Warren, in the usual style, hoped that he was better; his answer was, "No, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death."

A man whom he had never seen before was employed one night to sit up with him. Being asked

1784. Ætat. 75. next morning how he liked his attendant, his answer was, "Not at all, Sir: the fellow's an ideot; he is as aukward as a turn-spit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse."

Mr. Windham having placed a pillow conveniently to support him, he thanked him for his kindness, and said, "That will do,—all that a pillow can do."

He repeated with great spirit a poem, consisting of several stanzas, in four lines, in alternate rhyme, which he said he had composed some years before,[2] on occasion of a rich, extravagant young gentleman's coming of age; saying he had never repeated it but once since he composed it, and had given but one copy of it. That copy was given to Mrs. Thrale, now Piozzi, who has published it in a Book which she entitles "British Synonimy," but which is truly a collection of entertaining remarks and stories, no matter whether accurate or not. Being a piece of exquisite satire, conveyed in a strain of pointed vivacity and humour, and in a manner of which no other instance is to be found in Johnson's writings, I shall here insert it:

Long-expected one-and-twenty,
Ling'ring year, at length is flown;
Pride and pleasure, pomp and plenty,
Great *** ****, are now your own.

[2] [In 1780. See his Letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated August 8, 1780: "You have heard in the papers how *** is come to age: I have enclosed a short song of congratulation, which you must not shew to any body.—It is odd that it should come into any body's head. I hope you will read it with candour; it is, I believe, one of the author's first essays in that way of writing, and a beginner is always to be treated with tenderness." M.]

1784. Ætat. 75.

Loosen'd from the Minor's tether,
Free to mortgage or to sell,
Wild as wind, and light as feather,
Bid the sons of thrift farewell.

Call the Betseys, Kates, and Jennies,
All the names that banish care;
Lavish of your grandsire's guineas,
Shew the spirit of an heir.

All that prey on vice and folly
Joy to see their quarry fly;
There the gamester, light and jolly,
There the lender, grave and sly.

Wealth, my lad, was made to wander,
Let it wander as it will;
Call the jockey, call the pander,
Bid them come and take their fill.

When the bonny blade carouses,
Pockets full, and spirits high—
What are acres? what are houses?
Only dirt, or wet or dry.

Should the guardian friend or mother
Tell the woes of wilful waste:
Scorn their counsel, scorn their pother,—
You can hang or drown at last.

As he opened a note which his servant brought to him, he said, "An odd thought strikes me:—we shall receive no letters in the grave."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

1784. Ætat. 75.

He requested three things of Sir Joshua Reynolds:—To forgive him thirty pounds which he had borrowed of him;—to read the Bible;—and never to use his pencil on a Sunday. Sir Joshua readily acquiesced.

Indeed he shewed the greatest anxiety for the religious improvement of his friends, to whom he discoursed of its infinite consequence. He begged of Mr. Hoole to think of what he had said, and to commit it to writing; and, upon being afterwards assured that this was done, pressed his hands, and in an earnest tone thanked him. Dr. Brocklesby having attended him with the utmost assiduity and kindness as his physician and friend, he was peculiarly desirous that this gentleman should not entertain any loose speculative notions, but be confirmed in the truths of Christianity, and insisted on his writing down in his presence, as nearly as he could collect it, the import of what passed on the subject: and Dr. Brocklesby having complied with the request, he made him sign the paper, and urged him to keep it in his own custody as long as he lived.

Johnson, with that native fortitude, which, amidst all his bodily distress and mental sufferings, never forsook him, asked Dr. Brocklesby, as a man in whom he had confidence, to tell him plainly whether he could recover. "Give me (said he) a direct answer." The Doctor having first asked him if he could bear the whole truth, which way soever it might lead, and being answered that he could, declared that, in his opinion, he could not recover without a miracle. "Then, (said Johnson,) I will take no more physick, not even my opiates: for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God

unclouded." In this resolution he persevered, and, at the same time, used only the weakest kinds of sustenance. Being pressed by Mr. Windham to take somewhat more generous nourishment, lest too low a diet should have the very effect which he dreaded, by debilitating his mind, he said, "I will take any thing but inebriating sustenance." 1784. Ætat. 75.

The Reverend Mr. Strahan, who was the son of his friend, and had been always one of his great favourites, had, during his last illness, the satisfaction of contributing to soothe and comfort him. That gentleman's house, at Islington, of which he is Vicar, afforded Johnson, occasionally and easily, an agreeable change of place and fresh air; and he attended also upon him in town in the discharge of the sacred offices of his profession.

Mr. Strahan has given me the agreeable assurance, that, after being in much agitation, Johnson became quite composed, and continued so till his death.

Dr. Brocklesby, who will not be suspected of fanaticism, obliged me with the following accounts:

"For some time before his death, all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and *propitiation* of JESUS CHRIST.

"He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the *sacrifice* of Jesus, as necessary beyond all good works whatever, for the salvation of mankind.

"He pressed me to study Dr. Clarke and to read his Sermons. I asked him why he pressed Dr. Clarke, an Arian.[3] 'Because, (said he,) he is fullest on the *propitiatory sacrifice*.'"

[3] The change of his sentiments with regard to Dr. Clarke, is

1784. Johnson having thus in his mind the true Christian scheme, at once rational and consolatory, unit-
Ætat. 75. ing justice and mercy in the DIVINITY, with the improvement of human nature, previous to his receiving the Holy Sacrament in his apartment, composed and fervently uttered this prayer:[4]

"Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of thy Son JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O LORD, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits, and thy mercy; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; make this commemoration available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity; and make the death of thy Son JESUS CHRIST effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude of my offences. Bless my friends; have mercy upon all men. Support me, by thy Holy Spirit, in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death; and receive me, at my death, to ever-

thus mentioned to me in a letter from the late Dr. Adams, Master of Pembroke College, Oxford.—"The Doctor's prejudices were the strongest, and certainly in another sense the weakest, that ever possessed a sensible man. You know his extreme zeal for orthodoxy. But did you ever hear what he told me himself? That he had made it a rule not to admit Dr. Clarke's name in his Dictionary. This, however, wore off. At some distance of time he advised with me what books he should read in defence of the Christian Religion. I recommended 'Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion,' as the best of the kind; and I find in what is called his 'Prayers and Meditations,' that he was frequently employed in the latter part of his time in reading Clarke's Sermons."

[4] The Reverend Mr. Strahan took care to have it preserved, and has inserted it in "Prayers and Meditations," p. 216.

lasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen." 1784. Ætat. 75.

Having, as has been already mentioned, made his will on the 8th and 9th of December, and settled all his worldly affairs, he languished till Monday, the 13th of that month, when he expired, about seven o'clock in the evening, with so little apparent pain that his attendants hardly perceived when his dissolution took place.

Of his last moments, my brother, Thomas David, has furnished me with the following particulars:

"The Doctor, from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned, was seldom or never fretful or out of temper, and often said to his faithful servant, who gave me this account, 'Attend, Francis, to the salvation of your soul, which is the object of greatest importance:' he also explained to him passages in the scripture, and seemed to have pleasure in talking upon religious subjects.

"On Monday, the 13th of December, the day on which he died, a Miss Morris, daughter to a particular friend of his, called, and said to Francis, that she begged to be permitted to see the Doctor, that she might earnestly request him to give her his blessing. Francis went into his room, followed by the young lady, and delivered the message. The Doctor turned himself in the bed, and said, 'God bless you, my dear!' These were the last words he spoke.—His difficulty of breathing increased till about seven o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Barber and Mrs. Desmoulins, who were sitting in the room, observing

1784. Ætat. 75. that the noise he made in breathing had ceased, went to the bed, and found he was dead.

About two days after his death, the following very agreeable account was communicated to Mr. Malone, in a letter by the Honourable John Byng, to whom I am much obliged for granting me permission to introduce it in my work.

"DEAR SIR,

"SINCE I saw you, I have had a long conversation with Cawston,[5] who sat up with Dr. Johnson, from nine o'clock on Sunday evening, till ten o'clock on Monday morning. And, from what I can gather from him, it should seem, that Dr. Johnson was perfectly composed, steady in hope, and resigned to death. At the interval of each hour, they assisted him to sit up in his bed, and move his legs, which were in much pain; when he regularly addressed himself to fervent prayer; and though, sometimes, his voice failed him, his sense never did, during that time. The only sustenance he received, was cyder and water. He said his mind was prepared, and the time to his dissolution seemed long. At six in the morning, he enquired the hour, and, on being informed, said that all went on regularly, and he felt he had but a few hours to live.

At ten o'clock in the morning, he parted from Cawston, saying, 'You should not detain Mr. Windham's servant:—I thank you; bear my remembrance to your master.' Cawston says, that no man could appear more collected, more devout, or

[5] Servant to the Right Honourable William Windham.

less terrified at the thoughts of the approaching minute. 1784. Ætat. 75.

"This account, which is so much more agreeable than, and somewhat different from, yours, has given us the satisfaction of thinking that that great man died as he lived, full of resignation, strengthened in faith, and joyful in hope."

A few days before his death, he had asked Sir John Hawkins, as one of his executors, where he should be buried; and on being answered, "Doubtless, in Westminster-Abbey," seemed to feel a satisfaction, very natural to a Poet; and indeed in my opinion very natural to every man of any imagination, who has no family sepulchre in which he can be laid with his fathers. Accordingly, upon Monday, December 20, his remains were deposited in that noble and renowned edifice; and over his grave was placed a large blue flag-stone, with this inscription:

"SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.
"*Obiit* XIII *die Decembris*,
"*Anno Domini*
"M. DCC. LXXXIV.
"*Ætatis suæ* LXXV."

His funeral was attended by a respectable number of his friends, particularly such of the members of THE LITERARY CLUB as were then in town; and was also honoured with the presence of several of the Reverend Chapter of Westminster. Mr. Burke Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Windham, Mr. Langton, Sir Charles Bunbury, and Mr. Colman, bore his pall.

1784. Ætat. 75. His school-fellow, Dr. Taylor, performed the mournful office of reading the burial service.

I trust, I shall not be accused of affectation, when I declare, that I find myself unable to express all that I felt upon the loss of such a "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend."[6] I shall, therefore, not say one word of my own, but adopt those of an eminent friend,[7] which he uttered with an abrupt felicity, superior to all studied compositions:—"He has made a chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up.—Johnson is dead.—Let us go to the next best:—there is nobody; no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson."

As Johnson had abundant homage paid to him

[6] On the subject of Johnson I may adopt the words of Sir John Harrington, concerning his venerable Tutor and Diocesan, Dr. John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells; "who hath given me some "helps, more hopes, all encouragements in my best studies: to "whom I never came but I grew more religious; from whom I "never went, but I parted better instructed. Of him therefore, "my acquaintance, my friend, my instructor, if I speak much, i "were not to be marvelled; if I speak frankly, it is not to be "blamed; and though I speak partially, it were to be pardoned." *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Vol. I. p. 136. There is one circumstance in Sir John's character of Bishop Still, which is peculiarly applicable to Johnson: "He became so famous a disputer, that the learnedest "were even afraid to dispute with him: and he finding his own "strength, could not stick to warn them in their arguments to "take heed to their answers, like a perfect fencer that will tell "aforehand in which button he will give the venew, or like a "cunning chess-player that will appoint aforehand with which "pawn and in what place he will give the mate." *Ibid.*

[7] [The late Right Hon. William Gerrard Hamilton, who had been intimately acquainted with Dr. Johnson near thirty years. He died in London, July 16, 1796, in his 69th or 70th year. M.]

during his life,[8] so no writer in this nation ever had such an accumulation of literary honours after his death. A sermon upon that event was preached in 1784. Ætat. 75.

[8] Beside the Dedications to him by Dr. Goldsmith, the Reverend Dr. Franklin, and the Reverend Mr. Wilson, which I have mentioned according to their dates, there was one by a lady, of a versification of "Aningait and Ajut, and one by the ingenious Mr. Walker, of his "Rhetorical Grammar." I have introduced into this work several compliments paid to him in the writings of his contemporaries; but the number of them is so great, that we may fairly say that there was almost a general tribute.

Let me not be forgetful of the honour done to him by Colonel Myddleton, of Gwaynynog, near Denbigh; who, on the banks of a rivulet in his park, where Johnson delighted to stand and repeat verses, erected an urn with the following inscription:

"This spot was often dignified by the presence of
"SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.
"Whose moral writings, exactly conformable to the precepts of
"Christianity,
"Gave ardour to Virtue and confidence to Truth."

As no inconsiderable circumstance of his fame, we must reckon the extraordinary zeal of the artists to extend and perpetuate his image. I can enumerate a bust by Mr. Nollekens, and the many casts which are made from it; several pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds from one of which, in the possession of Duke of Dorset, Mr. Humphry executed a beautiful miniature in enamel: one by Mrs. Frances Reynolds, Sir Joshua's sister: one by Mr. Zoffanij; and one by Mr. Opie; and the following engravings of his portrait: 1. One by Cooke, from Sir Joshua, for the Proprietors' edition of his folio Dictionary.—2. One from ditto, by ditto, for their quarto edition.—3. One from Opie, by Heath, for Harrison's edition of his Dictionary.—4. One from Nolleken's bust of him, by Bartolozzi, for Fielding's quarto edition of his Dictionary.—5. One small, from Harding, by Trotter, for his "Beauties."—6. One small, from Sir Joshua, by Trotter, for his "Lives of the Poets." —7. One small, from Sir Joshua, by Hall, for "The Rambler." —8. One small, from an original drawing, in the possession of Mr. John Simco, etched by Trotter, for another edition of his Lives of the Poets."—9. One small, no painter's name, etched by Taylor, for his Johnsoniana.—10. One folio whole-length, with his oak-

1784. Ætat. 75. St. Mary's church, Oxford, before the University, by the Reverend Mr. Agutter, of Magdalen College.[9] The Lives, the Memoirs, the Essays, both in prose and verse, which have been published concerning him, would make many volumes. The nu-

stick, as described in Boswell's "Tour," drawn and etched by Trotter.—11. One large mezzotinto, from Sir Joshua, by Doughty. —12. One large Roman head, from Sir Joshua, by Marchi.—13. One octavo, holding a book to his eye, from Sir Joshua, by Hall, for his works.—14. One small, from a drawing from the life, and engraved by Trotter, for his Life published by Kearsley.—15 One large, from Opie, by Mr. Townley, (brother of Mr. Townley, of the Commons) an ingenious artist, who resided some time at Berlin, and has the honour of being engraver to his Majesty the King of Prussia. This is one of the finest mezzotintos that ever was executed; and what renders it of extraordinary value, the plate was destroyed after four or five impressions only were taken off. One of them is in the possession of Sir William Scott. Mr. Townley has lately been prevailed with to execute and publish another of the same, that it may be more generally circulated among the admirers of Dr. Johnson.—16. One large, from Sir Joshua's first picture of him, by Heath, for this work, in quarto.—17. One octavo, by Baker, for the octavo edition.—18. And one for "Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy," in which Johnson's countenance is analysed upon the principles of that fanciful writer.—There are also several seals with his head cut on them, particularly a very fine one by that eminent artist, Edward Burch, Esq. R. A. in the possession of the younger Dr. Charles Burney.

Let me add, as a proof of the popularity of his character, that there are copper pieces struck at Birmingham, with his head impressed on them, which pass current as half-pence there, and in the neighbouring parts of the country.

[9] It is not yet published.—In a letter to me, Mr. Agutter says, "My sermon before the University was more engaged with Dr. Johnson's *moral* than his *intellectual* character. It particularly examined his fear of death, and suggested several reasons for the apprehensions of the good, and the indifference of the infidel in their last hours; this was illustrated by contrasting the death of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Hume: the text was Job. xxi. 22—26."

merous attacks too upon him, I consider as part of his consequence, upon the principle which he himself so well knew and asserted. Many who trembled at his presence, were forward in assault, when they no longer apprehended danger. When one of his little pragmatical foes was invidiously snarling at his fame, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's table, the Reverend Dr. Parr exclaimed, with his usual bold animation, "Ay, now that the old lion is dead, every ass thinks he may kick at him." 1784. Ætat. 75.

A monument for him, in Westminster-Abbey was resolved upon soon after his death, and was supported by a most respectable contribution; but the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's having come to a resolution of admitting monuments there, upon a liberal and magnificent plan, that Cathehral was afterwards fixed on, as the place in which a cenotaph should be erected to his memory: and in the cathedral of his native city of Lichfield, a smaller one is to be erected.[1] To compose his epitaph, could not but excite the warmest competition of genius."[2] If *laudari à laudato viro* be praise which

[1] [This monument has been since erected. It consists of a Medallion, with a tablet beneath, on which is this inscsiption:

"The friends of SAMUEL JOHNSON, L.L D.
"A Native of Lichfield,
"Erected this Monument,
"As a tribute of respect
"To the Memory of a man of extensive learning,
"A distinguished moral writer, and a sincere Christian.
"He died Dec. 13, 1784, aged 75. M.]

[2] The Reverend Dr. Parr, on being requested to undertake it, thus expressed himself in a letter to William Seward, Esq.
"I leave this mighty task to some hardier and some abler writer.

1784. is highly estimable, I should not forgive myself were
Ætat. 75. I to omit the following sepulchral verses on the au-

The variety and splendour of Johnson's attainments, the peculiarities of his character, his private virtues, and his literary publications, fill me with confusion and dismay, when I reflect upon the confined and difficult species of composition, in which alone they can be expressed, with propriety, upon his monument."

But I understand that this great scholar, and warm admirer of Johnson, has yielded to repeated solicitations, and executed the very difficult undertaking.

[Dr. Johnson's Monument, consisting of a Colossal Figure leaning against a column, (but not very strongly resembling him,) has since the death of our authour been placed in St. Paul's Cathedral, having been first opened to publick view, Feb. 23, 1796. The Epitaph was written by the Rev. Dr. Parr, and is as follows:

A ☧ Ω
SAMVELI · IOHNSON
GRAMMATICO · ET · CRITICO
SCRIPTORVM · ANGLICORVM · LITTERATE · PERITO
POETAE · LVMINIBVS · SENTENTIARVM
ET · PONDERIBVS · VERBORVM · ADMIRABILI
MAGISTRO · VIRTVTIS · GRAVISSIMO
HOMINI · OPTIMO · ET · SINGVLARIS · EXEMPLI
QVI · VIXIT · ANN · LXXV · MENS · II. · DIEB · XIIII.
DECESSIT · IDIB · DECEMBR · ANN · CHRIST · cIↄ · Iↄcc · LXXXIIII
SEPVLT · IN · AED · SANCT · PETR · WESTMONASTERIENS.
XIII · KAL . IANVAR · ANN · CHRIST · cIↄ · Iↄcc · LXXXV
AMICI · ET · SODALES · LITTERARII
PECVNIA · CONLATA
H · M · FACIVND · CVRAVER.

On a scroll in his hand are the following words:

ΕΝΜΑΚΑΡΕΣΣΙΠΟΝΩΝΑΝΤΑΞΙΟΣΕΙΗΑΜΟΙΒΗ

On one side of the monument—FACIEBAT JOHANNES BACON SCVLPTOR ANN. CHRIST. M.DCC.LXXXXV.

The Subscription for this monument, which cost eleven hundred guineas, was begun by the LITERARY CLUB, and completed by the aid of Dr. Johnson's other friends and admirers. M.]

thour of THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY, written by the Right Honourable Henry Flood:[3] 1784. Ætat. 75.

"No need of Latin or of Greek to grace
"Our JOHNSON's memory, or inscribe his grave;
"His native language claims this mournful space,
"To pay the immortality he gave."

The chracter of SAMUEL JOHNSON has, I trust, been so developed in the course of this work, that they who have honoured it with a perusal, may be considered as well acquainted with him. As, however, it may be expected that I should collect into one view the capital and distinguishing features of this extraordinary man, I shall endeavour to acquit

[3] To prevent any misconception on this subject, Mr. Malone, by whom these lines were obligingly communicated, requests me to add the following remark:

"In justice to the late Mr. Flood, now himself wanting, and highly meriting, an epitaph from his country, to which his transcendent talents did the highest honour, as well as the most important service; it should be observed, that these lines were by no means intended as a regular monumental inscription for Dr. Johnson. Had he undertaken to write an appropriated and discriminative epitaph for that excellent and extraordinary man, those who knew Mr. Flood's vigor of mind, will have no doubt that he would have produced one worthy of his illustrious subject. But the fact was merely this: In Dec. 1789, after a large subscription had been made for Dr. Johnson's monument, to which Mr. Flood liberally contributed, Mr. Malone happened to call on him at his house, in Berners-street, and the conversation turning on the proposed monument, Mr. Malone maintained that the epitaph, by whomsoever it should be written, ought to be in Latin. Mr. Flood thought differently. The next morning, in the postscript to a note on another subject, he mentioned that he continued of the same opinion as on the preceding day, and subjoined the lines above given."

1784. myself of that part of my biographical undertaking,[a]
Ætat. 75. however difficult it may be to do that which many of my readers will do better for themselves.

His figure was large and well formed, and his countenance of the cast of an ancient statue; yet his appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth, by convulsive cramps, by the scars of that distemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure, and by a slovenly mode of dress. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does mind govern and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual preceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament, that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous use of his limbs: when he walked, it was like the struggling gait of one in fetters; when he rode, he had no command or direction of his horse, but was carried as if in a balloon. That with his constitution and habits of life he should have lived seventy-five years, is a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preservative of the human frame.

Man is, in general, made up of contradictory qualities; and these will ever shew themselves in strange succession, where a consistency in appearance at least, if not reality, has not been attained by long habits of philosophical discipline. In proportion to the native vigour of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult to be adjusted; and, therefore, we are

[a] As I do not see any reason to give a different character of my illustrious friend now, from what I formerly gave, the greatest part of the sketch of him in my "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," is here adopted.

not to wonder, that Johnson exhibited an eminent example of this remark which I have made upon human nature. At different times, he seemed a different man, in some respects; not, however, in any great or essential article, upon which he had fully employed his mind, and settled certain principles of duty, but only in his manners, and in the display of argument and fancy in his talk. He was prone to superstition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvellous and the mysterious, his vigorous reason examined the evidence with jealousy. He was a sincere and zealous Christian, of high Church-of-England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely suffer to be questioned; and had, perhaps, at an early period, narrowed his mind somewhat too much, both as to religion and politicks. His being impressed with the danger of extreme latitude in either, though he was of a very independent spirit, occasioned his appearing somewhat unfavourable to the prevalence of that noble freedom of sentiment which is the best possession of man. Nor can it be denied, that he had many prejudices; which, however, frequently suggested many of his pointed sayings, that rather shew a playfulness of fancy than any settled malignity. He was steady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of religion and morality; both from a regard for the order of society, and from a veneration for the GREAT SOURCE of all order; correct, nay stern in his taste; hard to please, and easily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a most humane and benevolent heart,[5] which shewed itself not only in

1784. Ætat. 75.

[6] In the *Olla Podrida*, a collection of Essays published at Oxford, there is an admirable paper upon the character of Johnson,

1784. a most liberal charity, as far as his circumstances
Ætat. 75. would allow, but in a thousand instances of active benevolence. He was afflicted with a bodily disease, which made him often restless and fretful; and with a constitutional melancholy, the clouds of which darkened the brightness of his fancy, and gave a gloomy cast to his whole course of thinking: we, therefore, ought not to wonder at his sallies of impatience and passion at any time; especially when provoked by obtrusive ignorance, or presuming petulance; and allowance must be made for his uttering hasty and satirical sallies even against his best friends. And, surely, when it is considered, that, "amidst sickness and sorrow," he exerted his faculties in so many works for the benefit of mankind, and particularly that he atchieved the great and admirable DICTIONARY of our language, we must be astonished at his resolution. The solemn text, "of him to whom much is given, much will be required," seems to have been ever present to his mind, in a rigorous sense, and to have made him dissatisfied with his labours and acts of goodness, however comparatively great; so that the unavoidable consciousness of his superiority was, in that respect, a cause of disquiet. He suffered so much from this, and from the gloom which perpetually haunted him, and made solitude frightful, that it may be said of him, "If in this life only he had hope, he was of all men most miserable." He loved praise, when it was brought to him; but was too proud to seek for it. He was somewhat susceptible of flattery. As he

written by the Reverend Dr. Horne, the last excellent Bishop of Norwich. The following passage is eminently happy:—"To reject wisdom, because the person of him who communicates it is uncouth, and his manners are inelegant;—what is it, but to throw away a pine-apple, and assign for a reason the roughness of its coat?

was general and unconfined in his studies, he cannot be considered as master of any one particular science; but he had accumulated a vast and various collection of learning and knowledge, which was so arranged in his mind, as to be ever in readiness to be brought forth. But his superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind; a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge, which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understanding, was, in him, true, evident, and actual wisdom. His moral precepts are practical; for they are drawn from an intimate acquaintance with human nature. His maxims carry conviction; for they are founded on the basis of common sense, and a very attentive and minute survey of real life. His mind was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet; yet it is remarkable, that, however rich his prose is in this respect, his poetical pieces, in general, have not much of that splendour, but are rather distinguished by strong sentiment, and acute observation, conveyed in harmonious and energetick verse, particularly in heroick couplets. Though usually grave, and even aweful in his deportment, he possessed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humour; he frequently indulged himself in colloquial pleasantry; and the heartiest merriment was often enjoyed in his company; with this great advantage, that it was entirely free from any poisonous tincture of vice or impiety, it was salutary to those who shared in it. He had accustomed himself to such

1784. Ætat. 75.

1784. accuracy in his common conversation,[7] that he at all
Ætat. 75. times expressed his thoughts with great force, and an

[7] Though a perfect resemblance of Johnson is not to be found in any age, parts of his character are admirably expressed by Clarendon, in drawing that of Lord Falkland, whom the noble and masterly historian describes at his seat near Oxford:—"Such an immenseness of wit, such a solidity of judgement, so infinite a fancy, bound in by a most logical ratiocination.—His acquaintance was cultivated by the most polite and accurate men, so that his house was an University in less volume, whither they came, not so much for repose as study, and to examine and refine those grosser propositions, which laziness and consent made current in conversation."

Bayle's account of *Menage* may also be quoted as exceedingly applicable to the great subject of this work.—"His illustrious friends erected a very glorious monument to him in the collection entitled *Menagiana*. Those who judge of things aright, wilt confess that this collection is very proper to shew the extent of genius and learning which was the character of Menage. And I may be bold to say, that *the excellent works he published will not distinguish him from other learned men so advantageously as this*. To publish books of great learning, to make Greek and Latin verses exceedingly well turned, is not a common talent, I own; neither is it extremely rare. It is incomparably more difficult to find men who can furnish discourse about an infinite number of things, and who can diversify them an hundred ways. How many authours are there, who are admired for their works, on account of the vast learning that is displayed in them, who are not able to sustain a conversation. Those who know Menage only by his books, might think he resembled those learned men: but if you shew the MENAGIANA, you distinguish him from them, and make him known by a talent which is given to very few learned men. There it appears that he was a man who spoke off-hand a thousand good things. His memory extended to what was ancient and modern; to the court and to the city; to the dead and to the living languages; to things serious and things jocose; in a word, to a thousand sorts of subjects. That which appeared a trifle to some readers of the *Menagiana*, who did not consider circumstances, caused admiration in other readers, who minded the difference between what a man speaks without preparation, and that which

elegant choice of language, the effect of which was aided by his having a loud voice, and a slow deliberate utterance. In him were united a most logical head with a most fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing: for he could reason close or wide, as he saw best for the moment. Exulting in his intellectual strength and dexterity, he could, when he pleased, be the greatest sophist that ever contended in the lists of declamation; and, from a spirit of contradiction, and a delight in shewing his powers, he would often maintain the wrong side with equal warmth and ingenuity; so that, when there was an audience, his real opinions could seldom be gathered from his talk; though when he was in company with a single friend, he would discuss a subject with genuine fairness; but he was too conscientious to make errour permanent and pernicious, by deliberately writing it; and, in all his numerous works, he earnestly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth; his piety being constant, and the ruling principle of all his conduct.

Such was SAMUEL JOHNSON, a man whose talents, acquirements, and virtues, were so extraordinary, that the more his character is considered, the more he will be regarded by the present age, and by posterity, with admiration and reverence.

he prepares for the press. And, therefore, we cannot sufficiently commend the care which his illustrious friends took to erect a monument so capable of giving him immortal glory. They were not obliged to rectify what they had heard him say; for, in so doing, they had not been faithful historians of his conversation."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

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1763. Character of Collins in the Poetical Calendar, published by Fawkes and Woty. *acknowl.*

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The Life of Ascham, also prefixed to that edition. *acknowl.*

Review of Telemachus, a Masque, by the Rev. George Graham, of Eton College, in the Critical Review. *acknowl.*

Dedication to the Queen of Mr. Hoole's Translation of Tasso. *acknowl.*

Account of the Detection of the Imposture of the Cock-Lane Ghost, published in the Newspapers and Gentleman's Magazine. *acknowl.*

1764. Part of a Review of Grainger's "Sugar Cane, a Poem," in the London Chronicle. *acknowl.*

Review of Goldsmith's Traveller, a Poem, in the Critical Review. *acknowl.*

1765. The Plays of William Shakspeare, in eight volumes, 8vo. with Notes. *acknowl.*

1766. The Fountains, a Fairy Tale, in Mrs. Williams's Miscellanies. *acknowl.*

1767. Dedication to the King of Mr. Adams's Treatise on the Globes. *acknowl.*

1769. Character of the Reverend Mr. Zachariah Mudge, in the London Chronicle. *acknowl.*

1770. The False Alarm. *acknowl.*

1771. Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands. *acknowl.*

1772. Defence of a Schoolmaster; dictated to me for the House of Lords. *acknowl.*

Argument in Support of the Law of *Vicious Intromission*; dictated to me for the Court of Session in Scotland. *acknowl.*

1773. Preface to Macbean's "Dictionary of Ancient Geography." *acknowl.*

Argument in Favour of the Rights of Lay Patrons; dictated to me for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. *acknowl.*

1774. The Patriot. *acknowl.*

1775. A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland. *acknowl.*

Proposals for publishing the Works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, in Three Volumes Quarto. *acknowl.*

Preface to Baretti's Easy Lessons in Italian and English. *intern. evid.*

Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. *acknowl.*

Argument on the Case of Dr. Memis; dictated to me for the Court of Sessions in Scotland. *acknowl.*

Argument to prove that the corporation of Stirling was corrupt; dictated to me for the House of Lords. *acknowl.*

1776. Argument in Support of the Right of immediate, and personal reprehension from the Pulpit; dictated to me. *acknowl.*

Proposals for publishing an Analysis of the Scotch Celtick Language, by the Reverend William Shaw. *acknowl.*

1777. Dedication to the King of the Posthumous Works of Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. *acknowl.*

Additions to the Life and Character of that Prelate; prefixed to those Works. *acknowl.*

Various Papers and Letters in Favour of the Reverend Dr. Dodd. *acknowl.*

1780. Advertisement for his Friend Mr. Thrale to the Worthy Electors of the Borough of Southwark. *acknowl.*

The first Paragraph of Mr. Thomas Davies's Life of Garrick. *acknowl.*

1781. Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the works of the most eminent English Poets; afterwards published with the Title of the Lives of the English Poets. *acknowl.*

Argument on the Importance of the Registration of Deeds; dictated to me for an Election Committee of the House of Commons. *acknowl.*

On the Distinction between Tory and Whig; dictated to me. *acknowl.*

On Vicarious Punishments, and the great Propitiation for the Sins of the World, by Jesus Christ; dictated to me. *acknowl.*

Argument in favour of Joseph Knight, an African Negro, who claimed his Liberty in the Court of Session in Scotland, and obtained it; dictated to me. *acknowl.*

Defence of Mr. Robertson, Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, against the Society of Procurators in Edinburgh, for having inserted in his Paper a ludicrous Paragraph against them; demonstrating that it was not an injurious Libel; dictated to me. *acknowl.*

1782. The greatest part, if not the whole, of a Reply, by the Reverend Mr. Shaw, to a Person at Edinburgh, of the Name of Clarke, refuting his arguments for the authenticity of the Poems published by Mr. James Macpherson as Translations from Ossian. *intern. evid.*

1784. List of the Authours of the Universal History, deposited in the British Museum, and printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for December, this year. *acknowl.*

Various Years.

Letters to Mrs. Thrale. *acknowl.*

Prayers and Meditations, which he delivered to the Rev. Mr. Strahan, enjoining him to publish them. *acknowl.*

Sermons, *left for Publication* by John Taylor, LL.D. Prebendary of Westminster, and given to the World by the Rev. Samuel Hayes, A. M. *intern. evid.**

* [To this List of the Writings of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Alexander Chalmers, with considerable probability, suggests to me that we may add the following:

In *the Gentleman's Magazine.*

1747. Lauder's Proposals for printing the *Adamus Exul* of Grotius. Vol. 20. p. 404.

1750. Address to the Publick, concerning Miss Williams's Miscellanies. Vol. 20. p. 428.

1753. Preface.

Notice of Mr. Edward Cave's death, inserted in the last page of the Index.

In *the Literary Magazine.*

1756. "Observations on the foregoing letter;" i. e. A letter on the American Colonies. Vol. 1. p. 66. M.]

Such was the number and variety of the Prose Works of this extraordinary man, which I have been able to discover, and am at liberty to mention; but we ought to keep in mind, that there must undoubtedly have been many more which are yet concealed; and we may add to the account, the numerous Letters which he wrote, of which a considerable part are yet unpublished. It is hoped that those persons in whose possession they are, will favour the world with them.

JAMES BOSWELL.

" After my death I wish no other herald,
" No other speaker of my living actions,
" To keep mine honour from corruption,
" But such an honest chronicler as Griffith."*

SHAKSPEARE, *Henry VIII.*

* See Dr. Johnson's letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated Ostick in Skie, September 30, 1773: " Boswell writes a regular Journal of our travels, which I think contains as much of what I say and do, as of all other occurrences together; "*for such a faithful chronicler is Griffith.*"

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